A Compass in the Sea of Life: Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953-1968

A Compass in the Sea of Life

Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953-1968

Simon Huxtable

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of London

2012

I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own, and the work of other persons is appropriately acknowledged.

Simon Huxtable

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development of Soviet journalism between 1953 and 1968 through a case study of the youth newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. Stalin's death removed the climate of fear and caution that had hitherto characterised Soviet journalism, and allowed for many values to be debated and renegotiated. This study examines these debates within their wider professional, social, and political contexts, and thus illuminates the possibilities and limits of reform in the post-Stalin era. In a period of rising educational levels, a widely-perceived crisis of youth values, and growing mass media saturation both from within the Soviet Union and from outside, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* journalists' understanding of themselves as protectors and educators of the public came into conflict with the belief that the press should be entertaining and informative. Moreover, there were continued tensions between the requirement for the press to be a beacon of social change, which journalists enthusiastically embraced, and the need for it to ensure social stability. This led to the collapse of the Stalinist 'propaganda state' model.

The thesis comprises five short thematic histories, each discussing different facets of the newspaper's work. It arrays a wide range of sources, from memoirs to Agit-Prop documents, but its main sources are the newspapers themselves and the transcripts of editorial discussions and Party meetings, which together explain not only *what* was published, but *why*. By examining the press from the point of view of its producers, this study challenges previous interpretations of Soviet propaganda. It shows that Soviet journalists were not wholly subservient to Party dictates, but were not dissidents either. Instead, the thesis suggests that the professionalization of journalism and relaxation of political controls allowed journalists to develop shared norms and establish priorities that borrowed from, but differed from those of the Party, leading to frequent conflict and confusion.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has benefited from the generous support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Funding for research at the Hoover Institution was provided by the Royal Historical Society, who also, along with the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, awarded funds to attend the ASEEES conference in Washington DC in 2011.

The process of completing this PhD has been made incomparably easier by a number of people who went out of their way to offer assistance. Anna Pilkington and Ol'ga Makarova were kind enough to allow me to audit their Russian language courses at Queen Mary, University of London at the start of my studies, without which none of what followed would have been possible. My thanks also to the administrative and library staff at Birkbeck College, who have provided help throughout help throughout my MA and PhD.

Galina Mikhailovna Tokareva in the Komsomol archive provided no end of helpful advice and assistance, and made it a priority to ensure that I did not become any thinner by insisting that I eat lunch in the *stolovaia*. Her remarkable anecdotes, pride in her work, and goodwill towards all those interested in the history of Soviet youth have provided some of the most enduring memories of this project. Kapitolina Kozhevnikova generously took the time to share with me her memories of her work at Komsomolka and *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

I am extremely grateful to both Dr Jessica Reinisch and Dr Polly Jones, who stepped in to supervise the project at a difficult time, provided invaluable feedback and advice, and set my neurotic mind at ease. I would also like to thank Dr Nik Wachsmann for agreeing to supervise the project in its closing stages and reading the final draft. Professor Orlando Figes also read early drafts of the introduction and Chapter 4.

I would also like to thank a number of people whom I met during my time writing the thesis. Dina Fainberg reminded me that I was not ploughing a lone furrow with my work on Soviet journalism. Michel Abesser, who made my research in Moscow incomparably more enjoyable, has been a beacon of the Thaw ideal of international friendship. Josh Clayton, Daniel Levitsky, and Anna Toropova have provided support, good conversation, infectious enthusiasm for all things Soviet and a willingness to meet for a restorative beer. I owe all of them a drink.

My family have supported me through thick and thin, even when the usefulness of a degree in History must have seemed difficult to discern. Hopefully this thesis can go some way to showing that it has not been in vain.

Chrysi Papaioannou has kept my spirits up, put up with my jokes, and made sure no participle was left hanging. It is a cliché to say "I couldn't have done it without you", but here it is unavoidable. It is to her that I dedicate this thesis.

A NOTE ON ARCHIVAL REFERENCES

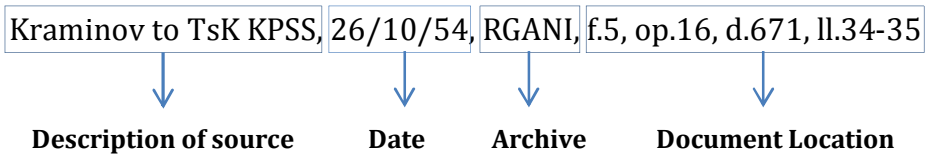
The main archives used in this thesis and their abbreviations are:

Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii	GARF
Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii	RGANI
Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Dokumenty Komsomola i molodezhnykh organizatsii)	RGASPI
Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Moskvy	TsAOPIM
Hoover Institution Archives	HIA

Russian archives use the following subdivisions, which are employed in this thesis:

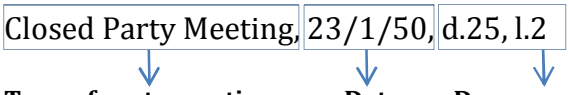
Fond	f.
Opis’	op.
Delo	d.
List	l.

Where possible, archival references contain a description of the source, a date, and archival details. For example:



For reasons of space, there is one key exception: the editorial *letuchki* and Party Organization meetings of *Komsomol’skaia pravda*. These are referred to in the following manner:

***Komsomol'skaia pravda* Party Meetings**



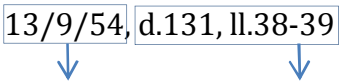
Type of party meeting
Open or closed, if stated in original source

Date

Document location
All Party Meetings for KP are in **TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1**. In references, only the *delo* and *list* are provided.

Komsomol'skaia pravda letuchki

All archival references beginning with a date refer to *Komsomol'skaia pravda letuchki* transcripts. Thus:



Date

Document location
All *letuchki* for KP are **in RGASPI, f.98M, op.1**. In references, only the *delo* and *list* are provided.

INTRODUCTION | **Party Assistants or Professionals? Rethinking Soviet Journalism after Stalin**

In August 1956, a short story entitled 'Editor-in-Chief' appeared in the literary journal *Novyi mir*, written by Tat'iana Tess, a sketch writer at the government newspaper *Izvestiia*.[1] Tess recounts the story of Klavdiia Leonidovna Kramskaia, a corrector at an unnamed Leningrad-based newspaper. In the story's opening paragraphs, Klavdiia visits various editorial departments to point out the fact that, for instance, the lawn-and-garden tractor 'KhTZ-7' was mistakenly called the 'KhMZ-6'. Colleagues fear her, and call her 'Nemesis' behind her back. But one day, Klavdiia is accused of making an error in a report about a medical conference because of which publication of the new edition is delayed. Klavdiia is plunged into turmoil, suffering a dark night of the soul, before coming to a realisation:

> All her life, she had fostered [воспитывала] in herself a strict internal discipline. This discipline demanded merciless captiousness [безжалостной придирчивость], tireless, "brazen" exactingness [«настырный» требовательности]. It wasn't so easy to get rid of them. Humanly [по-человечески], she understood that perfectly. How many times had she suffered offensive reproaches for pettiness, for intolerance, for dry pedantry! She heard out these reproaches, without justifying herself. There was something that only she knew about. In the depths of her heart there lived a great, tender love for a person [к человеку], to whom she had been devoted and unselfishly served all her life – a simple and wonderful person called 'the reader'.[2]

At the end of the story, Klavdiia suspects that her 'mistake' was, in reality, an error made by the Head of the Department of Information, a certain Shmelev. In the story's final set piece, she accuses him of a lack of attentiveness in failing to check the proofs. He denies it, before adding: "And what if it's true? Big deal! Think about it, a trifling story about some second-class conference. In the *redaktsiia* everybody's forgotten about such rubbish." Klavdiia is outraged: "A trifling story … A second-class conference. In a newspaper there cannot be a

[1] Tat'iana Tess, 'Glavnyi redaktor' *Novyi mir* 8 (1956), 183-196.
[2] Ibid., 193. Unless stated, all translations from Russian sources in this thesis are my own.

trifling story. In science there are no second-class conferences. Don't you understand?" (195) Shmelev replies that Klavdiia is taking the whole thing too seriously – "Anyone would think that you're the Editor-in-Chief." (196) "Everybody has one Editor-in-Chief – and that's the reader" she cries out, later adding:

> Yes, I'm an insignificant worker, you're right. And it's true that I haven't written two lines in my whole life. But I know very well that every reader, whether he can write or not, has only one heart. It can't be saved, like a pocket battery, but has to be used in everything you do. … A person who doesn't respect the reader has no place at the paper! (196)

Tess's story delivers an insight into the changing social values of Soviet journalists after the Twentieth Party Congress and is in many ways a manifesto for post-Stalinist journalism. The corrector was an archetypal Stalinist occupation, representing the pedantic desire for accuracy over inspiration that characterised the press during that period, which was filled with banal materials about "second class" conferences in out-of-the-way places. Klavdiia's "internal discipline" represented the dominant attitude to policing the self, and society as a whole. Her sudden realisation that the journalist was primarily responsible to the reader was indicative of a shift in journalistic attitudes, and suggested that, in order to throw off the fear of error sown by Stalinism, journalists needed to overcome their negligent approach to their audience.

This thesis, a case study of the youth newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (KP) from the death of Stalin to the Prague Spring, examines the change in orientation implied by Tess's short story. It shows how journalists renegotiated their competing commitments to the Party, to the profession, and to the public, and illustrates how the parameters of this relationship developed over time. By looking at the Soviet press from the point of view of its producers, this thesis suggests that Soviet propaganda was less top-down than is often thought.

Rather than mute processors of party orders or cynical resisters[3], journalists of the post-Stalin period emerge as mediators between politicians and public – as the group most responsible for giving a human face to the regime's ideas and making them appeal to the public. Soviet ideology was thus the end product of a negotiation – albeit unequal – between different parties, rather than a set of commandments.

The study covers a pivotal period in which outright terror was renounced as a method of social control. Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 was one of the main vehicles of this change. His attack on Stalin's 'cult of personality' fostered a less restrictive social atmosphere, but also created a number of historical lacunae that proved difficult to explain, and even more difficult to fashion into a useable past. It cast doubt on the actions of party leaders during the period of Terror in the 1930s, and destroyed the idea of Soviet history as a story of linear progress. The speech also created a sense of crisis amongst Soviet journalists. It was the press, after all, which had played such a central role in burnishing the image of the leader in print. An editorial in *Pravda* later that year called for a "serious reconstruction" of the press, and demanded that journalists eliminate the press's dull and superficial approach to reporting on life" and "clichés, vague judgements and political blather".[4]

Komsomol'skaia pravda was at the heart of the process of overturning these ingrained Stalinist habits, providing many of the forms that would animate the 'Thaw' press elsewhere.[5] As a youth newspaper, it needed to find popular forms to engage young readers, who were thought to be intolerant of

---

[3] Ivan Zassoursky has suggested that Sergei Dovlatov's cynical satire *Compromise* is an accurate description of how the Soviet press functioned behind the scenes: *Media and Power in Post-Soviet Russia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), p.231.

[4] 'Bol'shie i pochetnye zadachi sovetskoi pechati' *Pravda* 5/5/56, 1.

[5] Because of the historical equation of the term 'Thaw' with liberalism (see Stephen F. Cohen, 'The Friends and Foes of Change: Reformism and Conservatism in the Soviet Union', in *The Soviet Union Since Stalin*, ed. by Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch and Robert Sharlet (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), pp.11–31), this thesis generally avoids the term, despite its rhetorical convenience, and the spirited defence of the term in Steven Bittner's *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

falsehood and the dull material that often passed for journalism.[6] In 1956, a young reader spoke of her "sceptical relationship to life's questions", as a result of the Soviet media's "varnishing of life".[7] Young people were thought to be especially susceptible to the vicissitudes of the political climate. As Elena Bruskova commented at an editorial meeting:

> … we must remember that today's twenty-year old studied in the First Grade and read dictionaries in which the name of Stalin appeared on almost every page, and then disappeared; Stalingrad was renamed as Volgograd and then Stalingrad again. Then there was the time when we took our children by the hand to the see 'Our Dear Nikita Sergeevich'. And then it turned out that it was a time of voluntarism…. All of that cannot but leave an imprint on a young twenty-year old."[8]

Soviet youth needed to be guided, or else they would become confused and disillusioned. Journalists at the paper tried to find a new voice with which to talk sincerely about moral and ethical issues, truthfully about the world around them, and critically about shortcomings in everyday life. The bulging postbags of reader correspondence would seem to suggest that the change in the content of KP was successful, while subscription levels rose to previously unattained heights: rising 300 per cent from 1.5 million in 1955, to 7.7 million in 1970.[9]

This study crosses the boundary between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods, and challenges dominant periodisations of the 1950s and 1960s. Historical accounts paint the shift from Khrushchev to Brezhnev as a turn from liberalisation to restriction.[10] In contrast to the "noise" of the Khrushchev-era press, "the hallmark of the period under Brezhnev was silence," claimed John Murray.[11] There is some truth to this: from the late 1960s the press became

---

[6] Natalia Roudakova, 'Comparing Transitions: Media, 'Transitions,' and Historical Change', in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, ed. by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.258.
[7] 11/6/56, d.173, ll.8-10.
[8] 17/10/67, d.455, l.52.
[9] Goriunov to Shelepin, 31/8/55, RGASPI f.98M, op.1, d.155, l.84; *Letopis' periodicheskikh izdanii SSSR 1966-1970. Chast' II* (Moscow: "Kniga", 1967), p.9.
[10] See Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Soviet Person after Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp.104-142.
[11] John Murray, *The Russian Press from Brezhnev to Yeltsin: Behind the Paper Curtain* (Aldershot:

more formulaic, and right from the beginning of Brezhnev's leadership there was increasing intolerance of criticism and dissidence. However, this thesis shows that there is another story to be told of the 'early' Brezhnev period. Far from being the endpoint of Khrushchev-era reforms, the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership promoted a modernising impulse which changed the way journalists viewed themselves and their public role. They were encouraged to reject the voluntarism of the Khrushchev era, and instead become the cheerleaders for rational discussion of economic issues, mirroring the regime's technocratic goals. At the same time, they sought to forge closer links with readers by commissioning sociological studies of their audience. This became especially urgent after market principles were applied to press distribution. This thesis suggests that the early Brezhnev era, rather than marking the death of the 'Thaw', represented an intensification of some of its ideals.

On a more profound level, there was a continuity between Khrushchev and Brezhnev-era journalism. Khrushchev's speech forced a change in methods of propaganda. Mirroring the move from coercion to persuasion, journalists were now expected not just to promote stability, but to encourage social change through public discussion and debate. This change gave propagandists, with journalists at the forefront, a far wider role in administering the public than they had previously enjoyed. But, unlike the 1920s and 1930s, when a parade of heroes and explorers captured the imagination of the public, the journalists of the post-Stalin period struggled to find convincing forms of mass journalism to drive social change. KP journalists frequently referred to their readers as having "grown up", meaning that young readers would no longer be swayed by mere assertions of truth, but needed more intelligent forms of agitation. But in an age of greater media literacy and increased education, the paper's journalists expressed frequent disquiet about "unhealthy moods" amongst Soviet youth and concern that their influence over young people was waning. Indeed, the story of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in the 1950s and 1960s is partly a story of journalists in their thirties trying to catch up with the tastes and habits of readers in their

---

Edward Elgar, 1994), p.31.

teens: trends which included an increasing lack of interest in the Party's messages, and a nasty habit of listening to Western radio. This thesis thus suggests that in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev era alike, KP's journalists were dealing with a similar question: how could the Soviet press educate readers in an age where the old ideological certainties were becoming increasingly fractured?

1 From Lenin to Khrushchev

Newspapers were always close to the thoughts of the Soviet elite. The press was the flag-bearer for the regime's ideals and provided an ideal and ever-expanding tool for delivering the Party's message to the masses. Many of the revolution's leading figures had worked for the press; Lenin gave his occupation as 'journalist' on his Party card. In 'Where to Begin?' he wrote that "The newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organiser".[12] This phrase was repeated *ad infinitum* by subsequent generations of Soviet journalists, leading some Western commentators to mistakenly suppose that the Soviet press flowed directly from the Leninist model.[13]

Yet the forms of the Bolshevik press were never set in stone, even if their relentless pro-government stance made them seem so. In the early post-revolutionary period, the newspaper was a significant concern for a generation of intellectuals, who saw in the revolution a means for remaking the press. Some promoted the worker-peasant correspondent movement, seeing in the words of amateur journalists something more authentic than the material

---

[12] V.I. Lenin, 'Where to Begin?' (1901), in *Lenin About the Press* (Prague: International Organisation of Journalists, 1972), pp.67-72 (71).

[13] Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.7-42; Frank Ellis, 'The Media as Social Engineer', in *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.192–222; Wilbur Schramm, 'The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press' in *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press should Be and Do* ed. by Fred S. Siebert (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp.105-146.

produced by professionals.[14] Others experimented with the newspaper form: in the early 1920s, the Blue Blouse Living Newspaper theatrical troupe performed the news in satirical skits and pantomimes to workers.[15] One of its writers was Sergei Tret'iakov, who called the newspaper the central cultural form of the epoch: "We have our epic literature," he wrote, "Our epic literature is the newspaper".[16]

Early Soviet newspapers were largely ineffective, however. A lack of trained specialists meant that editors were often forced to rely on pre-revolutionary 'bourgeois' journalists, whose commitment to the Communist cause was constantly in doubt.[17] Frequent shortages of newsprint, problems of distribution, and financial constraints limited the ability of the Bolshevik leadership to disseminate its message.[18] Newspapers seemed unable to speak the language of the masses, with readers frequently confused by their mixture of new terminology and bureaucratic language.[19] When its language was genuinely popular, as was the case with many of the urban evening newspapers, they contained the sort of society gossip that was considered inimical to Bolshevik ideals.[20]

In the mid-1920s, as free newspapers were abolished, a severe regime of cost accounting was launched, with tighter controls imposed on content, leading to a fall in circulations, but a rise in profits.[21] A new kind of agitational "mass journalism", centred around the country's production tasks, was inaugurated, whose tone was exhortative and agitational. At the forefront of these

---

[14] Jeremy Hicks, 'From Conduits to Commanders: Shifting Views of Worker Correspondents, 1924-1926' *Revolutionary Russia* 19/2 (December 2006), 131-149.
[15] Lynn Mally, 'The Americanization of the Soviet Living Newspaper' *Carl Beck Papers* 1903 (February 2008), 4-9.
[16] Sergei Tret'iakov, 'The New Leo Tolstoy' *October* 118 (Fall 2006), 49.
[17] Julie Kay Mueller, 'Staffing Newspapers and Training Journalists in Early Soviet Russia' *Journal of Social History* 31/4 (Summer 1998), 851-873; Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.46.
[18] Kenez, pp.45-49.
[19] Michael S. Gorham, *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).
[20] Matthew Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp.108-118.
[21] Ibid., pp.46-69.

developments was a new title, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, which emerged in May 1925 as the official newspaper of the Komsomol Central Committee and the Moscow Komsomol organisation.[22] The resolution authorising the paper's creation stated that "*Komsomol'skaia pravda* should be a leading and at the same time a mass newspaper."[23]

KP's early years were characterised by a lively pursuit of readers, with the paper featuring striking designs and a wide range of attention-grabbing materials, which were sometimes a little too extreme for the authorities' liking.[24] KP increased its circulation from just over 90,000 in 1925 to almost 600,000 six years later, making it, alongside *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, one of the country's largest newspapers.[25] Many readers were well beyond Komsomol age, but KP's success relied on its youthful appeal. During the country's 'Great Break', KP was the most innovative of all the papers covering the nation's industrialisation. Leading journalists were sent on location to report on the progress of mass construction tasks, and these articles enjoyed considerable enthusiasm amongst readers and the Party.[26]

However, there were darker sides to the paper's work. KP inveighed against kulaks and reported with anger with the trials of so-called wreckers (though journalists are unlikely to have exerted much choice over the material they printed).[27] Over the course of that decade, the forces of terror consumed journalists and editors. In June 1937, a purge of the paper's staff was carried out. Of 187 staff, 78 (more than two fifths) were repressed, including Editor-in-

---

[22] The Komsomol, or Vsesoiuznyi Leninskii **Kom**munisticheskii **so**iuz **mol**odezhi (All-Union Leninist Communist Union of Youth), was a youth organization for 14-28 year olds, subordinated to the Party, set up in 1918. Membership was not compulsory, but it nevertheless reached around 35 per cent of possible members by 1959, at which time its membership was 18 million (Steven E. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp.64, 99).

[23] Stanislav Gold'farb, *Komsomol'skaia pravda, 1925-2005 gg. Ocherki istorii* (Irkutsk: Irkutskaia oblastnaia tipografiia No.1, 2008), p.36.

[24] Lenoe, pp.190-195.

[25] 'Tsifry pobed' KP, 5/5/31.

[26] David Brandenberger, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p.70; Gol'dfarb, pp.103-120.

[27] Lenoe, pp.78-100.

Chief Vladimir Bubekin, and his deputy Anton Vysotskii.[28] On some days there was panic because no senior staff remained to approve printing: everyone had been arrested.[29]

Meanwhile, glorification of the leader was continuing apace. The 1930s saw the apotheosis of the Stalin cult in the press: enormous portraits of the Soviet leader adorned the paper's front page, while articles resembled a massive storehouse of citations, attesting to the genius of the *vozhd'*.[30] The paper's famed satirist Il'ia Shatunovskii recalled that the paper's propaganda department possessed a card index of Stalin quotations which could be referred to for such prestigious occasions as the "fourteenth anniversary of Comrade Stalin's speech at the Kremlin Palace at the graduation of academics of the Red Army".[31]

All of this took place against the backdrop of a steady but significant rise in newspaper circulations. In 1940, the newspaper press had a total circulation of 8.8 million, compared to only 1.7 million in 1918.[32] This rise was abruptly ended by the Nazi invasion of June 1941, which had a profound effect on the tone of the Soviet press. Newspapers began to speak in a different voice, and Stalin largely disappeared into the shadows, with ordinary Soviet citizens taking centre stage. Led by a series of talented war correspondents, such as Vasilii Grossman, Il'ia Erenburg, and Konstantin Simonov, Soviet newspapers sought to spur the Soviet public to action through a shared sense of revulsion.[33] No longer motivated solely by Communist ideals or by Stalin, this public was moved by loyalty to nation, family, and home.[34]

---

[28] Gol'dfarb, pp.135-136, 144.
[29] Aleksei Adzhubei, *Te desiat' let* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1989), p.93.
[30] Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[31] Il'ia Shatunovskii, *Zapiski strelianogo vorob'ia* (Moscow: Voskresen'e, 2003), pp.31-33.
[32] Mark W. Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p.93.
[33] Louise McReynolds, 'Dateline Stalingrad: Newspaper Correspondents at the Front', in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. by Richard Stites (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp.28–43.
[34] Jeffrey Brooks, 'Pravda Goes to War', in Stites, pp.9–27 and *Thank You*, pp.180-184.

After the war, however, those who sought to write in the same vein were looked on suspiciously, and war journalism was criticised in official texts.[35] Thomas C. Wolfe calls the late Stalin period the "nadir" of the Soviet press, and it is difficult to disagree with his assessment.[36] The lack of spaces for professional issues to be discussed led to a decline in the quality of Soviet journalism. The professional journal *Bol'shevistskaia pechat'*, which ceased printing after the outbreak of war, had provided an important forum for discussing journalistic craft and delivered valuable information on international trends – even during the Terror. Its disappearance meant that journalists were only rarely addressed as a true collective. The Stalinist press became a repository of resolutions, official reports and speeches, and by the late 1940s, the Stalin cult was resurgent.[37] While the crowds who wept at Stalin's death testify to the cult's effectiveness, its ubiquity did little to improve press content. Newspapers were further enfeebled by a 1946 Resolution on *Leningrad* and *Zvezda*, which presaged a tightening of restrictions on artistic production, while a subsequent campaign against cosmopolitanism targeted a number of journalists at the paper.[38] Even after Stalin's death, memories of such events were not easily forgotten, contributing to a fear of innovation that lasted until 1956. However, the influence of the war had not worn off completely: the post-war KP printed a far greater amount of material on the personal lives of young people, reflecting the wartime shift towards everyday life.[39] Valentin Ovechkin's cycle of sketches, beginning with 'District Routine', published in *Novyi mir* in 1952, and continuing in *Pravda* between 1953 and 1956, showed signs of the critical literary journalism that would become prominent under Khrushchev.[40]

Although Soviet journalism to a large extent regressed after the war, there were indications of change on an institutional level. Steps were taken to

---

[35] McReynolds, p.40.
[36] Wolfe, p.32.
[37] Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p.229; Brooks, *Thank You*, pp.195-232.
[38] Gol'dfarb, pp.104-105.
[39] Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.250-291.
[40] Valentin Ovechkin, 'Raionnye budni' *Novyi mir* 9 (1952).

improve the press by opening journalism departments in universities, including Moscow State University's prestigious journalism faculty, which opened its doors in 1947 and trained many of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*'s leading staff. Such faculties represented a vast improvement over the system of Party and Komsomol schools where journalists learned to write "only in the official language of protocols".[41] While these new departments continued to deliver an ideologically charged curriculum, they also provided practical experience and a space for discussion.[42] KP's famed columnist and '*zhurfak*' graduate Inna Rudenko recalled how a literature professor at MGU in the early 1950s taught her the value of independent thought. When he was fired there were protests from students, to which the authorities replied: "The Party knows better who is worthy of teaching in the ideological faculty and who is not".[43]

The graduates of such faculties were to become the leading lights of post-Stalinist journalism. In addition to Rudenko (1954) were figures like Aleksei Adzhubei and Boris Pankin (both MGU, 1952), Iurii Voronov (LGU, 1952), Boris Grushin (Philosophy, MGU, 1952), and Il'ia Shatunovskii (Philology, MGU, 1950) all of whom would become stars in their own right. If we compare the statistics from 1957 with those from 1950, a remarkable change is evident: while only 38.1 per cent of cadres had experience of higher education in 1950, that figure almost doubled to 75.2 per cent by 1957.[44] This represents a truly remarkable change, and suggests another reason for the raising of journalistic standards after Stalin's death. Not only were journalists better educated, they also tended to be younger. 1953 saw a changing of the guard, as many older journalists left the paper. While in 1950 54.7 per cent of workers on the editorial staff were

---

[41] Quote from former *Izvestiia* journalist N.M. Ivanovskaia in Tat'iana Volkova, 'A.I. Adzhubei - Redaktor i publitsist' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, MGU, 2010, pp.63-64.

[42] On Soviet universities in the late Stalin period see Benjamin K. Tromley, 'Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2007.

[43] Inna Rudenko, 'V Moskve i daleko ot Moskvy' in *Polveka na Mokhovoi (1947-1997)* (Moscow: MGU, 1997), p.130.

[44] 'Svedeniia o komsomol'skikh gazetakh', 1957, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.847, ll.48, 61-63; Gol'dfarb, pp.266-267.

over the age of 36, by 1957, the figure had fallen to 39.5 per cent.[45] According to Il'ia Shatunovskii, young journalists brought a new mood to the paper:

> There were not yet thousands of already-written *feuilletons* on our shoulders, not yet problems where we had expressed everything we thought, that for years had ached inside us, had seethed in our hearts. Then, we had only just started our newspaper life and felt ourselves to be almost pioneers. Every theme was new for us, it gripped us deeply, seemed immensely important, and any delay was intolerable.[46]

This suggests that, although change was visible only to those who looked closely, structures were in place for transformation given the right impetus.

Yet after Stalin's death, journalists appeared uncertain about how to proceed in the absence of clear guidance from the regime, and it was only after the Secret Speech that journalists were able to carry out systematic change. Journalists and the regime often disagreed about the direction of the post-1956 press, but there was agreement on one point: Stalinist forms of propaganda, based on ritual incantations of loyalty to the leader, and an abundance of official information, were unsuitable for an era in which conformity was no longer the highest social value. Newspapers now needed to appeal to readers. "There is still much dull stuff in our papers," said Khrushchev "Sometimes you take a paper, finger it through and put it aside. Afterward you cannot even recall what it said".[47]

This led to radical change. Journalists began to preach the virtues of truth-telling and sincerity, assuming a socially transformative role that owed a debt both to the discussions of the wider artistic intelligentsia and to ideas of official ideologists. New horizons opened up for creative journalists, who began to promote socially activist forms of journalism that encouraged readers to think about their relationship to socialism, rather than feeding them pre-digested formulae.[48] Journalists began to encourage initiative from below, and

---

[45] Ibid.
[46] Il'ia Shatunovskii, 'Tretii' in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma press, 2003), p.579.
[47] Quoted in William J. Eaton, 'Red Editor: Aleksei Adzhubei', *Nieman Reports* 16/2 (June 1963), 15.
[48] See Wolfe, *Governing*; Roudakova, 'Comparing Transitions', pp.246–77.

urged its readers to think and act independently – the latter very much in line with the voluntaristic spirit of the epoch. They attempted to protect citizens against bureaucracy, uncover industrial abuses, and expose corruption – a role that was officially mandated in the lore of the Soviet press, but which had largely fallen by the wayside under Stalin.

In 1961, the regime proclaimed that Communism would be built 'in the main' within two decades, and propagated the 'Moral Code of the Builder of Communism', which provided a series of behavioural commandments for citizens. This intertwining of individual morality with the construction of the good society meant that late Stalinist attempts to secure consent through repetition were out-dated: the media once again needed to help create a new kind of individual as it had in the early Stalin period. There was a huge increase – and not just in the youth press – of material concentrating on so-called "moral and ethical themes". Thus, the Soviet press performed the role of an organ of enlightenment, seeking to modify behaviours in order to create the 'good' citizen.[49] Such a vision of normative citizenship was also on show in the paper's anti-religious campaigning, while sensationalistic articles on so-called *stiliagi* and *tuneiadtsy* were restrictive attempts to maintain social order against non-conformist youth.[50] Although the Soviet press never attained the levels of righteous fervour that it employed against 'enemies' in the 1930s (indeed, the term 'enemy' largely disappeared from Soviet discourse), there were enough similarities in its division of the world into exemplary heroes and incorrigible outsiders, to suggest that there were still two camps in the world: 'us' and 'them'.[51]

These apparent contradictions between the 'progressive' and 'repressive' functions of the Soviet press are indicative of the wider contradictions of the

---

[49] Wolfe, p.18.

[50] Miriam Dobson, 'Anti-religious Campaigns in the Russian Press, 1953-1964' *Slovo* 13 (2001), 139-152; Kristin Roth-Ey, 'Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Princeton University, 2003, pp.46-98.

[51] See, for example, Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp.44-46, 136-141, 179-184.

period that earlier scholars have called the 'Thaw'. This was a period of grand, sometimes utopian, plans, driven by a fundamentally optimistic view of human nature and a belief in the malleability of individuals, ordered by a leader who, at times, seemed guided by the conviction that it was possible to will a policy into existence, without the need to dabble in practicalities. This allowed for the revelation of Stalin's crimes and the release of innocent convicts from the Gulag, greater freedoms for intellectuals, and a policy of 'peaceful coexistence' that opened the Soviet Union to the rest of the world. But the same optimism led to a Virgin Lands policy that prized optimism over science, a series of rash agricultural reforms, and a set of laws that criminalised vast swathes of the population.

Rather than a "prolonging of Stalinist policies"[52], schemes such as the house committees, the *druzhina* – even the criminalisation of so-called 'petty criminals' and 'parasites' – were all cut from the same cloth as more 'liberal' reforms. They were predicated on the belief that human nature was malleable, and that the careful attentions of the collective, or the 'short, sharp shock' of a spell in jail would mean that troublemakers could be safely reintroduced into society.[53] These fundamentally illiberal measures increased surveillance of citizens on the micro-level, but the impulse behind them was the same one that had brought to Soviet society a degree of freedom.

Only by understanding this can we begin to comprehend the apparent contradictions of the 'Thaw'-era *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. Eager to adopt the tone of the reader's friend, on the side of the Soviet "little man", but at the same time, quick to denounce and ridicule those who deviated from the norm; prone to bouts of lachrymose emotionalism, but equally to scaremongering,

---

[52] Eleonory Gilburd and Larisa Zakharova, 'Avant-propos', *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47/1-2 (January-June 2006), 12-13.

[53] Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Brian Lapierre, 'Private Matters or Public Crimes: The Emergence of Domestic Hooliganism in the Soviet Union, 1939-1966', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp.191-207; Sheila Fitzpatrick, ''Social parasites': How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism' *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47/1-2 (January-June 2006), 377-408.

Komsomol'skaia pravda was not as liberal as Thomas Wolfe has suggested, but it was not 'conservative', either.[54] It was simply – for better or worse – a product of the times.

2 Journalists as Professionals

A nagging question that arose when reading scholarly studies of Soviet society provided the genesis for this project. These studies employed press articles as a source, but viewed their content as a more-or-less reliable mirror of the *regime's* views.[55] There was certainly a large overlap between the regime's policies and the content of the press, but did Soviet newspapers really provide such an unproblematic window into the beliefs of the political elite? To answer this question, it is necessary to put the journalist back into Soviet press history – and into the history of Soviet society. Only by analysing the social *milieu* of Soviet journalists, both in terms of their professional relationships and their relationships with the regime, can we better understand the changes that took place after Stalin's death.

The relationship between the journalist and the regime had advantages and disadvantages for both parties. Association with the regime allowed journalists at central newspapers to speak with the authoritative voice of the Party, guaranteeing publicity for their viewpoints and, for their voice to be heard in the corridors of power. They were valued intermediaries between the corridors of power and the Soviet everyday, between reality and representation. They possessed leeway to write imaginatively, and were entrusted with the task of producing an authoritative, day-to-day picture of reality and turning bland ideology into readable copy – with a print run that most authors could only dream of. Working in the press had other perks: it gave journalists a generous (while not lavish) salary, housing, decent canteen food, and paid holidays in

[54] Wolfe, Ch.1.

[55] E.g. Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines As Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), which analyses the women's journal *Rabotnitsa* without once attending to its journalistic context.

resorts. However, it was also the source of many difficulties: journalists were forced to censor themselves, and lived under constant peril of censure. Under Stalin, this was backed up by the threat of state violence, but even after his death, journalists were confronted with their political dependency on a daily basis – the masthead of their papers told them as much – and expected to produce a statement of orthodoxy that met with Party approval, all the while promoting the country's march towards Communism, which could sometimes spill over into unwarranted excess.

This was one of the reasons that, seen from the regime's point of view, journalists were a necessary evil. Journalists alone were capable, on a daily basis, of turning dry ideology into life-like prose and promoting the cause of Communist construction. Khrushchev argued in a Kremlin speech at the First All-Union Congress of Journalists in 1959, that journalists were the party's "assistants":

> Why assistants? Because you are indeed always on hand [под рукой] for the party. As soon as any decision needs to be explained and carried out, we appeal to you, and you, as the most faithful transmission belt [приводной ремень], take the decision of the party and bring it into the very heart of our people. [56]

But journalists had other ideas about their profession, seeing themselves, not just as mouthpieces for the Party, but also as creative intellectuals. This meant that journalists and politicians had subtly different ideas about the role of the Soviet newspaper, and, because of this, entrusting to journalists the Party's propaganda tasks entailed a certain loss of control over the Party's messages, leading to clashes.

Despite the thousands of Party workers charged with maintaining ideological orthodoxy under Stalin, the regime was incapable of policing every word. A talented and obedient group of *gazetchiki* was necessary to ensure that the press sent out the right messages. Then, violence and the appointment of bureaucrats to key positions meant that compliance was relatively easy to secure. But after Stalin's death, the renunciation of terror allowed journalists

[56] *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd zhurnalistov. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960), pp.11-12.

greater leeway. Though the Party continued to play the leading role in setting priorities, it relaxed the prescriptive approach to content that had characterised the Stalin era, allowing journalists to act with a greater degree of freedom.[57] Journalists were still subject to administrative sanction, but only in rare instances did they receive anything worse than a reprimand.

This process of relaxation was, to some extent, a development that began before the Secret Speech – and perhaps before 1953. In a number of spheres, the late Stalin period saw opportunities, however circumscribed, for groups to act in ways that were not entirely dictated by the regime. Informal groups of environmental activists congregated around issues of concern and received support from the public[58]; scientists carved out spaces for independent activity[59]; creative unions became a means both for discussing creative issues and also for distributing benefits (sometimes in ways that were reminiscent of the corrupt local power structures of the Brezhnev era)[60]; and the phenomenon of the *kompaniia*, small intellectual circles for debate and discussion, seemed to suggest that within post-war society there existed spaces that had not been penetrated by the state.[61] It might therefore seem to make sense to see the Khrushchev period as marking the continuation of social processes that were inaugurated under the conditions of post-war Stalinism.[62]

The late Stalin period created structures that bore fruit after Stalin's death, the opening of journalism faculties in several Soviet cities in the late

---

[57] Karl Aimermakher [Eimermacher], 'Partiinoe upravlenie kul'turoi i formy ee samoorganizatsii (1953-1964/67)', in *Ideologicheskie Komissii TsK KPSS, 1958-1964. Dokumenty.* ed. by Aimermakher et al. (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998), p.7.

[58] Douglas Weiner, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachëv* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

[59] Nikolai Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[60] Kirill Tomov, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Vera Tolz, ''Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period' *Contemporary European History* 11 (2002), 87-105.

[61] Juliane Fürst, 'Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the *Kompaniia* Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.229-249; Tromley, pp.94-150.

[62] Juliane Fürst, 'The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy between Stalin and Khrushchev', in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* ed. by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.135-153.

1940s being one example. However, some fields were more heavily policed than others, and journalism was one of them. One reason was that journalism's centrality to the functions of governance made supervision vital. But another explanation might be that, while Soviet culture privileged the linguistic over the non-linguistic,[63] this greater 'legibility' led to tighter controls. Fields which required expert interpretation to be 'read', such as music or dance, generally had an easier time than primarily textual media, such as literature, poetry, or journalism, where Party authorities assumed that their layman's knowledge was sufficient for comprehension (indeed for a layman to comprehend it was precisely the point).

So, despite the opening of journalism faculties, journalists still possessed no Union, no *Dom zhurnalista* in which to meet, and no publications through which journalistic priorities could be discussed. The absence of such structures not only diminished journalists' status, but their abilities, too. It is no coincidence that students, like the ones who entered MGU's new journalism faculty in the late 1940s, who were able to discuss such priorities, were the driving force behind the changes of post-Stalin period. Such divergence between various intelligentsia groups suggests that there was no uniform direction to intelligentsia-regime relations within post-war Soviet society, and that a particular intellectual grouping's social function dictated its trajectory.

After Stalin's death, Soviet journalism began to move in a different direction. In 1954, D. Kraminov, *Pravda*'s foreign editor, wrote to the Central Committee about his embarrassment that the Soviet Union's journalists, unlike their counterparts in other 'fraternal states', lacked a union, meaning that they were unable to lead the global 'progressive' journalism movement.[64] The Central Committee soon acted to grant Kraminov his wish and avoid further embarrassment on the international stage.[65] For Dmitrii Goriunov, Editor-in-Chief of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and one of the Union's administrators, the

[63] Nancy Condee, 'The Cultural Codes of the Thaw' in *Nikita Khrushchev,* ed. by William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, Abbot Gleason (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p.161.
[64] Kraminov to TsK KPSS, 26/10/54, RGANI, f.5, op.16, d.671, ll.34-35.
[65] Proekt postanovleniia TsK KPSS: 'O sozdanii soiuza sovetskikh zhurnalistov', undated, 1954, RGANI, f.5, op.16, d.671, ll.45-45 ob.

Union's tasks were to improve ties with foreign journalists, but also to raise the ideological and creative level of journalists, to train new journalists, to discuss creative issues, and to provide links with the worker-peasant correspondent movement.[66] In the coming years, the Union would provide an important forum for creative discussion, though it appears that its largest impact was as symbol of journalists' growing social stature and as a means for building a collective identity.

Indeed, the notion of the collective is crucial. This thesis seeks to go beyond the idea put forward by Oleg Kharkhordin that collective structures under Khrushchev were inherently totalising and controlling.[67] While there was a disciplinary function to the Komsomolka *kollektiv*, which judged misbehaviour and condemned creative missteps, there was also a sense in which it protected and insulated its members from the attacks of the authorities. Memoirs and interviews with former staff at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* hint at the emergence of a close-knit community, bound by shared values, a sense of camaraderie, and a common language: journalists worked together, drank together, and stuck together when attacked.[68] Indeed, the KP *redaktsiia* had some of the qualities of a *kruzhok*: a community of like-minded creative intellectuals who debated social issues.

Journalists' editorial debates suggest that existing analytical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of state-society interactions in the Soviet Union are inadequate. If the relationship between Party authorities and journalists cannot be understood as a form of resistance, neither can the current emphasis on subjectivity, with its emphasis on the complex interlacing of political discourse and individual striving, fully explain the existence of economies of action that functioned outside the posited binary of state and individual.[69]

---

[66] D. Goriunov, 'Kakim budet Soiuz sovetskikh zhurnalistov', *Pravda* 5/5/56, 2.
[67] Kharkhordin, *Collective.*
[68] See the interviews collected in *Bol'she, chem gazeta* ,ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006); *Aleksei Adzhubei v koridorakh chetvertoi vlasti*, ed. by Dmitrii Mamleev (Moscow: Izvestiia, 2003).
[69] For a paper that argues that journalists did resist Soviet power, see Epp Lauk, and Tiiu Kreegipuu, 'Was It All Pure Propaganda?: Journalistic Practices of 'Silent Resistance' in Soviet Estonian Journalism', *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, 15 (2010), 167–90.

Recent scholarship on intelligentsia groups, such as the élite students discussed in Benjamin Tromley's dissertation on university students and the artistic collectives arrayed in Steven Bittner's monograph on the Arbat intelligentsia, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*, show how these groups were mini-communities, possessing their own values, and their own ways of interacting – both with each other and with representatives of the authorities.[70]

The case of Soviet journalists similarly suggests that *group* interactions, like those that existed between members of the *Komsomol'skaia pravda* collective, formed a fundamental part of the fabric of Khrushchev-era society and beyond. A decline in terror was coupled with an expansion of higher and practical education, and an intensification of activity in professional unions. The creation of spaces for discussion created shared values, and increasing homogenisation of training led to shared processes of socialisation, which meant that this highly educated population began to lose its sense of primary identification with the Party. But their aim was not so much to resist the Party, as to maintain social status and uphold independence.

In this respect, it might be said that intelligentsia groups were undergoing a process of *professionalisation*. Literature on the concept suggests that number of conditions need to be met for a group of institutional actors to call themselves 'professionals'.[71] One crucial factor is autonomy, roughly defined as the ability to lay claim to a particular body of knowledge, and to resist the intrusions of outsiders though the ability to define the priorities of the profession in one's own terms.[72]

But, whether through political or economic pressures, journalists have typically possessed neither freedom of the means of production, nor expert

---

[70] Tromley, 'Re-Imagining'; Bittner, *Many Lives*. See also Richard Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofiicial Music During the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Paul Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[71] See Harold L. Wilensky, 'The Professionalization of Everyone?', *American Sociological Review* 70/2 (September 1964), 137-158; Talcott Parsons, 'Professions', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Vol. 8*, ed. by David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp.536-547. On journalists and professionalism more generally, see William E. Porter, 'Journalism' in *Ibid. Vol. 8*, p.265.

[72] Wilensky, 138.

knowledge.[73] These problems were compounded in authoritarian countries, where the autonomy of journalists was eroded by the clearly stated requirement for the press to act as a telegraph of state policy. For political scientist Thomas F. Remington, professionalism requires the ability to exercise independence from political constraints – something which Soviet journalists could not demonstrate.[74] On a reading of Soviet sociological studies, he concluded that, particularly on a local level, the pressure for journalists to turn out copy was so great that they did not have time to exercise their own judgement, but rather saw fulfilling orders as a goal in itself.[75] Overwork led journalists to the easiest (official) sources of information, and led to identikit stories. For these reasons, Remington argued that Soviet journalism could not be termed a profession.

Yet these were not uniquely Soviet problems: pressure to produce copy, rushed writing around deadlines, a tendency to write for superiors, a reliance on official forms of information, and a lack of knowledge about the audience have been observed in studies of the field in the United States.[76] Moreover, as the authors of a comparative study of world media systems have pointed out, a high level of political interference in journalists' work ("political parallelism") can often coexist with a high level of professionalism.[77] Jane Leftwich Curry's study of Polish journalists under Communism has shown that proximity to the corridors of power was not regarded as a sign of surrender, but as a token of

---

[73] Though some countries, such as Italy and the United Kingdom, require journalists to sit entrance exams before beginning their careers, this has little to no bearing on their level of professionalism, as the differing levels of professionalism in these two countries shows. See Daniel C. Hallin, Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.33.

[74] Thomas F. Remington, *The Truth of Authority: Ideology and Communication in the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), Ch.6.

[75] Remington's conclusions suggest that further study on regional variations in journalism is necessary to understand fully the nature of the profession. In this thesis, as well as Curry's, journalists situated in urban centres were studied. These were typically the most talented journalists, who are likely to have identified with the profession most strongly.

[76] Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (London: Constance, 1980); Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking The Audience* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991).

[77] Hallin/Mancini 2004, pp.33-34.

prestige; comments made by Soviet journalists at both public and private meetings seem to suggest that the same situation existed in the USSR.[78] While Curry conceded that the Polish context was very different to the western context, she argued that only an ethic of professionalism within the field could explain the actions of Polish journalists. Though journalists did not enjoy autonomy from the regime, they nevertheless found prestige in the fact that their work was valued by the authorities. Yet, at the same time, these groups sought, within the constraints of a Party state, to put into practice their own version of the party's priorities.

The case of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* illustrates how journalists developed a system of professional norms and methods for judging excellence and distributing prestige – two criteria often considered to be markers of professionalism.[79] For Hallin and Mancini, professionalism is usually manifested in common standards of newsworthiness and the ability "to define their standing in the field in terms of the opinions of fellow journalists, rather than those of outsiders".[80] Soviet journalists gave out awards for outstanding articles, while honoraria for the best material were decided in-house. At *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, staff members routinely criticised the work of outsiders, be they non-staff authors such as workers and peasants, or politicians, whose dry style and pompous tone was seen as exemplifying everything journalists were trying to avoid. Hallin and Mancini further claim that journalists have typically compensated for their lack of expert knowledge by intensifying their service to the public, something that was clearly the case in the Soviet context.[81]

All in all, the Soviet, Polish, and Chinese cases all suggest that a tendency towards journalistic professionalism existed in Communist societies, but in a

---

[78] Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990). A recent study of Chinese media has corroborated Curry's findings. Yuezhi Zhao, 'Understanding China's Media System in a World Historical Context' in Hallin/Mancini 2012, pp.143-173.
[79] Hallin/Mancini 2004, pp.35-36.
[80] Ibid., p.36.
[81] Ibid., pp.36-37. See also Porter, 'Journalism'.

different guise to other countries. Rather than viewing professionalism normatively, we need to view it functionally, in relation both to society and to politics. Therefore, that the best way to understand the specificities of Soviet journalism is not to cordon it off from the rest of the world, but to analyse it alongside examples from other nations. The western model of the press, with its predominant focus on news and information, has too often been taken as normative. This project is not *stricto sensu* a comparative project: its examples are all drawn from the USSR, and its intention is to shed light on the history of the post-Stalin Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the thesis compares the Soviet Union and western countries to highlight differences and similarities – both in terms of journalistic *practice*, and also in terms of the relationship between socio-political context and the forms that journalism has taken. Moreover, it stresses the interlinking of domestic and Western conceptions of journalism within the Soviet press corps, showing that Soviet journalists were part of a world where knowledge about journalistic innovations were becoming increasingly available as models to be discussed, if not always adopted.

3 The Death of the Propaganda State?

The word 'propaganda' figures prominently in much western research on Soviet mass media. This research relied on the negative connotations of the word in the western imagination to fulminate against the dangers of Soviet propaganda.[82] Some suggested that the regime was engaged in a systematic campaign, driven by Soviet advances in psychiatry, to indoctrinate its population, while others urged action to counter it.[83]

Despite being a dread word in the western imagination, the term tripped off the Soviet tongue more easily. In works such as "Where to Begin" and "What is to Be Done", Lenin openly discussed the requirements of propaganda and

[82] Stefan T. Possony, *A Century of Conflict: Communist Techniques of World Revolution* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); John C. Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques* (London: Meuthen, 1964). Frederick Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964) is less bellicose.
[83] See Alan M.G. Little, 'Pavlov and Propaganda', *Problems of Communism* 2 (1953), 14-21.

agitation.[84] Once the Bolsheviks came to power, propaganda came to be woven into the very fabric of Soviet public life. The press worked in tandem with radio and television, posters and banners, literature and the arts, schools and lecture networks in a mutually reinforcing meshwork of enlightenment and education: a "propaganda state".[85]

The term "propaganda state" has been employed as a description of the Soviet Union in the years that followed the revolution, when some of the fundamental principles of Bolshevism were enshrined, and also for the Stalin period, where these principles were put to work in the service of public mobilisation and public quiescence.[86] Scholars have not used the term for the post-1953 period, even though the state's ideological apparatus remained geared towards the party line, and all areas of official life were penetrated by politics. However, fundamental changes in the style and form of propaganda, and in the context for that propaganda, meant that the Soviet propaganda state was imperilled.

The preconditions for the efficacy of Stalinist propaganda were constant repetition, information rationing, and a Party monopoly on the means of distribution. This system was effective until the Terror, when the rapid transformation of heroes into enemies of the people led to widespread confusion and disbelief.[87] After the war, the return of veterans who had travelled beyond Soviet borders, often returning with forbidden cultural treasures as well as stories of foreign lands, threatened the regime's rationing of information, while the leadership's decision to allow ideologically incorrect 'trophy films' to circulate in Soviet cinemas can only be explained by a desire to fill the country's coffers.[88] Yet propaganda became ever more defensive and

---

[84] V.I. Lenin, 'Where to Begin?' (1901), 'What is To Be Done?' (1902) in *Lenin About the Press*, pp.67-72, 72-106.
[85] Gayle Durham Hollander, *Soviet Political Indoctrination: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda Since Stalin* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Alex Inkeles, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951).
[86] Kenez, *Propaganda State*; Brandenberger, *Propaganda State*.
[87] Brandenberger, pp.181-197.
[88] Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 206; Roth-Ey, 'Mass Media', 106-122; Mark Edele, 'Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953', *Jahrbücher für*

insular in an attempt to maintain and inculcate an orthodox line, with the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign a clear example. The late Stalin period thus displayed the same tension between entertainment and enlightenment that emerged under Khrushchev. This tension was exacerbated by contradictory policies, leading to heightened anxiety about the perceived threat posed by foreign nations and an intense need for cultural orthodoxy in the face of this threat.[89]

In *Crisis of the Propaganda State*, David Brandenberger refers to Ron Suny's division of ideology into a discursive, or cultural pole, and a dogmatic, or doctrinal pole.[90] In the Stalinist context, the former encompassed a range of innovative forms, which sought to bring out the essence of Bolshevik ideology, leading by the early 1930s to a "surprisingly inclusive ideological culture" which had the ability to mobilise the masses.[91] Around the time of the Great Terror, this gave way to doctrinal orthodoxy, at which point stabilisation became more important than transformation.[92] The doctrinal version of ideology remained dominant for the next half century, claims Brandenberger, "paralysing the evocative nature of the propaganda state".[93]

Does this ring true for the Khrushchev era? After all, Khrushchev overturned one of the fundamental orthodoxies of Soviet ideology: the positive role of Stalin in Soviet history. Indeed, one of the most pressing tasks for Soviet journalists (and not just for them) was to redraft a "useable past" by privileging the heady mobilising experiences of the Civil War and first Five-Year plan, and attempting to pass over the crimes of the Stalin period in silence. The Khrushchev period thus witnessed an attempt, however halting, to create a new kind of mass journalism, grouped around a new set of 'Leninist norms', which would mobilise the public for a new set of construction tasks. Journalists at KP

Geschichte Osteuropas 50/1 (2002), 37-61. Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), pp.191-193.

[89] Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

[90] See also Matthew Lenoe's distinction between agitation and propaganda, see Lenoe, pp.26-29.

[91] Brandenberger, p.257.

[92] Quoted in Ibid., pp.256-57.

[93] Ibid., p.257.

sought to involve their readers in public-oriented activities and discussion. To put it in Leninist terms, they began to explore their role as a "collective organisers" in addition to their role as "propagandists and agitators".

Kristin Roth Ey's *Moscow Prime Time* deals explicitly with the fate of Soviet mass mobilisation after Stalin's death.[94] Although the press is relegated to the margins of her account, her history of post-Stalinist mass culture clearly illustrates how Soviet cultural authorities were unable to strike a balance between entertainment and enlightenment. Instead, cultural leaders were caught in a highly contradictory situation where profits clashed with the needs of propaganda. Her account attests to the fact that social changes had rendered the 1930s model of Soviet propaganda largely inoperative. Soviet citizens now enjoyed choices – between different Soviet media products, but also products from other countries. The Soviet Union began to cautiously open out to the world, hosting Picasso and Léger exhibitions, allowing thousands of foreigners to flood the capital during the Youth Festival of 1957, and Soviet tourists to travel the world.[95] Journalists, too, were able to journey outside the country to visit colleagues abroad, and figures like Adzhubei learned much from the experience.

Increased cultural contact was a sign of the Soviet élite's growing confidence in the stability of Soviet society, but was also a sign of its weakening global prestige. For example, the 1957 Youth Festival was planned as an attempt to dampen down global outrage over the invasion of Hungary the year before.[96] Increased international exchange threatened Soviet identity by bringing it into direct contact with popular cultural forms which were anathema

---

[94] Roth-Ey, *Moscow*.

[95] See Vladimir Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp.88-120; Eleonory Gilburd, 'To See Paris and Die: Western Culture in the Soviet Union, 1950s and 1960s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley, 2010; Susan E. Reid, ''Who Will Beat Whom?' Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959' *Kritika* 9/4 (Fall 2008), 855-904; Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad After Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[96] Gilburd, 'To See Paris'.

to the nation's highbrow cultural values.[97] Worse, still, were unwanted flows of information, including the broadcasts of Western radio stations such as the Voice of America, Radio Liberty, the BBC, and Deutsche Welle. These stations broadcast music that impeded the Party's ability to dictate popular taste, and reported on events that challenged the Party's news monopoly. This begged the question: was it possible for an vanguard project of social and individual transformation to thrive in a climate of globalised communications, with an increasingly educated population as its object of transformation?

As a newspaper aimed at youth, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* provides a particularly interesting case study, since youth was central to the process of reconstruction, both literally and symbolically. The moral reconstruction of the nation after the excesses of Stalinism, and the physical reconstruction of the nation's infrastructure were rhetorically linked. Soviet youth now became a barometer of the nation's wellbeing: healthy youth meant healthy social body. Yet the press suggested that Soviet youth was not in such good shape, frequently printing articles on so-called *stiliagi*, *tuneiadtsy*, and *bezdelniki*, or else lamenting the nihilist moods of the student population. The paper's coverage of these figures was designed to mock, disgrace and discourage, but, inadvertently, it created a sense of moral panic, revealed cracks in the social edifice and created an alluring 'outlaw' stereotype. Although the story of the Soviet press after Stalin's death is the story of a new beginning, it may well be that it was the beginning of the end. The case of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* raises fundamental questions about the viability of the traditional Soviet mobilisatory model to achieve the regime's stated aims as the Soviet Union entered its sixth decade.

Implicitly or explicitly, the 'propaganda state' model was the driving force behind much of the western research on the Soviet press in the post-World War

[97] Roth-Ey, 'Mass Media', *Moscow*, Sudha Rajagopalan, *Leave Disco Dancer Alone: Indian Cinema and Soviet Movie-Going After Stalin* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2008); Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dneprpetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

II period. Such research tended to treat the press as part of a total system of propaganda, and sometimes as a strategic threat. Within that scholarship, the main trend was towards a systematic description of the Soviet press network, including the structure of the Soviet media, the nature of journalism training, the framework of control and censorship, and the press's connection with readers – in short, the "dynamic interrelations between the structure and functioning of the media of communication and the social system in which those media operate".[98]

That quotation comes from the first study of Soviet mass communications – one that influenced practically all subsequent analyses: Alex Inkeles's *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia* (1950).[99] Based on a meticulous reading of Soviet sources, *Public Opinion*'s insightful analysis of source material and scholarly neutrality set it apart from many subsequent studies. What interested Inkeles was not just the formal characteristics of the Soviet mass media system (censorship, ideological oversight, etc.), but also the ways in which propaganda messages reached their audience, something he expanded upon in his subsequent work.[100]

However, most experts failed to expand on his findings, smoothing over the rough edges suggested by Inkeles, and proposing a far more homogeneous view of the Soviet media. Exemplifying this trend was Wilbur Schramm's tendentious "Soviet Communist Theory of the Press", which contained many of the tropes that would sustain writing about the Soviet press in the future: its theoretical debt to Marx and Lenin, its negative understanding of freedom, its similarities to Nazism, and the lack of news contained within it.[101] What comes out most strongly from Schramm's chapter is the idea of Soviet media as 'other': a prevalent trope in the wider literature. Antony Buzek wrote in 1964 that

---

[98] Inkeles, p.7.

[99] Hopkins openly states his debt to *Public Opinion* in *Mass Media*, ix, and Gayle Durham Hollander's, *Soviet Political Indoctrination* also bears a certain similarity.

[100] Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, Clyde Kluckhorn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

[101] Schramm, pp.105-146. For a discussion of Schramm's work see Natalia Roudakova, 'From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of their Public after Socialism'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Stanford University, 2008, pp.31-40.

studies of the communist press should not compare it with the media in a "free society". To do so would be to

> fail to understand the essence of the communist press, its transformation into a fully subordinated tool of propaganda, its place and functions within the larger framework of communist society. Communist society is based upon different philosophical conceptions of social development, of the role of individuals and political or public organisations and institutions within it. It interprets differently such values as truth, freedom, objectivity, and so on.[102]

Other studies cited the Marquis de Custine and made generalisations about "Russian susceptibility and adherence to doctrine and dogma".[103] Soviet mass media was seen as the child of the Russians' perverse passion for authority. In these studies, one gets the distinct sense that within the media sphere, just like the Soviet Union as a whole, nothing ever changed. Authors gave the impression of a press proceeding through an "empty, homogeneous time", where 1917 was identical to 1957.[104] Where change was observed, it was explained away as merely cosmetic: the media may have become superficially more lively or more critical, but it was still above all Communist.[105]

Within this scholarship, the role of the journalist was almost invisible. Antony Buzek concluded that the journalist's education had indoctrinated him with the idea that he "must express, not his own views, but only the party policy". He admitted that there were attempts in the 1950s and 1960s under Khrushchev to change this situation, but he found "no sign of changed attitudes", adding that "Soviet journalists are no rebels yet, only faithful servants of the

---

[102] Antony Buzek, *How the Communist Press Works* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), p.9.
[103] James W. Markham, *Voices of the Red Giants: Communications in Russia and China* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1967), p.23. See also Schramm, 'Soviet Communist'; Hopkins, pp.115-122.
[104] Roudakova, 'Fourth Estate', pp.38-39.
[105] These missteps lasted beyond the 1950s and 1960s: they are visible, for example, in the work of the Kremlinologist Françoise Thom, who in 1989 called the language of mass media a "weird product of the human mind", something that "conveys no new ideas and describes nothing whatever" in *Newspeak: The Language of Soviet Communism*, Trans. Ken Connelly (London; Lexington: The Claridge Press, 1989), pp.209, 74.

party".[106] For Paul Lendvai, they were "victims of a system that often treats them as cogs in the vast propaganda machine".[107]

It was not such a great leap to assume that the content of the press was entirely congruent with the will of the Party. Failing to investigate how journalism worked in practice, scholars saw journalists' work as being squeezed into an ideological mangle which began with self-censorship, and, via Agit-Prop and Glavlit, ended with an editor-in-chief who "deal[t] a final blow to any shadows of ideas that may have seeped through in one way or another and penetrated the newspaper."[108] Such works accurately described the *formal* structures of control, but tended to animate theoretical concepts into real life monsters. Lacking an understanding of the 'unwritten rules' and the ways in which *gazetchiki* could manipulate the formal system to achieve desired outcomes, there emerged a widespread belief that instructions translated into reality.[109]

Such ideas were challenged by Mark Hopkins in *Mass Media in Soviet Russia* (1970). As Soviet affairs specialist for the *Milwaukee Journal*, Hopkins spent time in Soviet newsrooms and observed in practice how journalists worked. "Such experience," claimed Hopkins, "can help in understanding how the Soviet mass media actually work, in contrast to how they should work. The second is frequently what is offered by official Soviet documents on the press; a reading of those alone as an accurate description of what exists can … be deceptive".[110] Hopkins confirmed that journalists were subject to a barrage of rules and regulations, but also that the interpretation and the enforcement of these rules varied. As a journalist, Hopkins was able to draw parallels between the Soviet and US mass media, insisting that Americans and Soviets had something to learn from each other. He claimed that "It is not … unreasonable

---

[106] Buzek, p.254.
[107] Paul Lendvai, *Bureaucracy of Truth: How Communist Governments Manage the News* (London: Burnett Books, 1981), p.103.
[108] Ilia Suslov, 'Censoring the Journalist' in *The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR*, ed. by Marianna Tax Childin and Maurice Friedberg (Boston MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.152.
[109] On this point see Roudakova, 'Fourth Estate', p.39.
[110] Hopkins, ix.

for American journalists to consider the Soviet experience in managing a state-owned press. We may learn from Soviet mistakes as well as from accomplishments."[111] This was a marked change from the tone of 'us' and 'them' that had hitherto existed in studies of Soviet mass media.

The aim of social science research was to understand the mass media network in the present moment, and thus researchers in the 1980s were examining at a very different press from the one analysed in this thesis.[112] Only when historians began to enter the fray was it possible to ask a new set of questions, at first related to the birth of Soviet propaganda, but subsequently the post-war period, too. One of the main virtues of historical studies has been to overturn the static picture of Soviet journalism characteristic of social science work, by suggesting that change was the rule, rather than the exception.

Peter Kenez criticised historians for their "rejection of evolution", and for assuming that "Lenin had the last word to say on all topics and that the system that he created is in existence today".[113] Kenez's *Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), was the first published historical monograph on Soviet mass media. Drawing on a range of Soviet primary sources, from pamphlets to documents from the Central Party archive, the book showed that the emergence of the 'propaganda state' was far from a smooth process, but a series of wrong turns and roads not travelled. However effortless the process of 'Bolshevising' mass media may have seemed, Kenez showed that the reality was far messier. The monograph contained a familiar flaw, however: its erasing of the journalist from history. "In the developing system there could be no such profession as journalism but simply a party function for publishing newspapers", and further argued that the Party "wanted no mediators between its policies and the publicizing of those policies".[114]

---

[111] Ibid., viii.
[112] Moreover, there was an increased interest in television, rather than the press by this point, as exemplified by the work of Ellen P. Mickiewicz, *Media and the Russian Public* (New York: Praeger, 1981).
[113] Kenez, p.14.
[114] Ibid., p.48.

It was only with the fall of the Soviet Union and freer access to archives that historians were able to challenge old conclusions and pose new questions. Julie Kay Mueller's research on Soviet journalism in the 1920s called into question Kenez's conclusions by showing how the new Soviet leadership, lacking trained cadres, was forced into alliances with the old pre-revolutionary journalistic elite.[115] Crucially, she showed that early Soviet journalists possessed concepts of professionalism that the new elite found difficult to erase. Other scholars looked at the opposite tendency: the attempt by political and cultural elites to *deprofessionalise* Soviet journalism through the use of worker-peasant correspondents.[116] Such studies can be connected with the work of Michael Gorham and Hugh Hudson, Jr., who analysed the effects of the early Soviet press in creating a truly Bolshevik language.[117]

However, a study that avoided the newly-opened archives arguably exerted the most influence on the wider scholarship. Closely analysing the content of *Pravda* over the course of more than three decades, Jeffrey Brooks' *Thank You Comrade Stalin* (2000) set out to reveal the underlying mechanisms of Soviet public culture.[118] As the relative freedoms of NEP gave way to the Stalin cult, a certain rhetoric of obligation to the leader became dominant, he argued. Thanking Comrade Stalin for the state's munificence was one manifestation of an "economy of the gift", a transaction that entwined the Soviet population in a state of eternal debt that could never be repaid.[119]

Brooks expanded scholarly understanding of the language of Stalinist citizenship, but failed to achieve his stated aim of describing Soviet public culture. For Brooks, *Pravda*, as the Soviet Union's newspaper of record, was at the heart of public discourse: "The press presented a normative standard for

---

[115] Mueller, 851-873.
[116] Stephen Coe, 'Peasants, the State and the Languages of NEP: The Rural Correspondents Movement in the Soviet Union, 1924-28'. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Michigan, 1993; Jennifer Clibbon, 'The Soviet Press and Grass-Roots Organization: The Rabkor Movement, NEP to the First Five Year Plan' Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Toronto, 1993.
[117] Michael Gorham, *Speaking*; Hugh D. Hudson, Jr. 'Shaping Peasant Political Discourse during the New Economic Policy: The Newspaper "Krest'ianskaia Gazeta" and the Case of 'Vladimir Ia.'' *Journal of Social History* 36/2 (Winter 2002), 303-317.
[118] Brooks, *Thank You*.
[119] Ibid., pp.83-105.

society as a whole and a practical guide to public behaviour for all citizens. It was a hierarchical system in which *Pravda*'s editorials constituted the last word".[120] However, recent studies have suggested that this discourse spread far wider than the press, and was especially prominent in Soviet visual culture.[121] Even if we accept that public culture was primarily disseminated through the written word, there is little acknowledgement of the specificities of *Pravda*, the most authoritative and most 'official' of Soviet newspapers.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Brooks's monograph evoked Stalinist discourse so successfully because it remained so hermetically sealed within it. His narrow focus evaded the question of the relationship of the press to society, while the word 'journalism' was used only in relation to Britain and the United States; the sole reference to it as a profession in Russia referred to the pre-revolutionary press.[122] Brooks implicitly suggested that the true author of the Soviet press was the Party, but without discussing the production context of Soviet newspapers, his analysis stood on shaky ground. As an explanation of Soviet public culture, *Thank You Comrade Stalin* offered only a piece of the puzzle; it was more successful as a recreation of the other-worldliness of Stalinist discourse than as an analysis of Stalinist society.

Matthew Lenoe's *Closer to the Masses* (2004), approached similar questions in a different way. Lenoe analysed the transition from the journalism of the early Soviet period to a new form of 'mass' journalism at the start of the first five-year plan. He posited that the Soviet press abandoned its commitment to 'enlightenment' goals of transforming the individual, and instead sought to 'ration' information for an audience of party insiders, material which focused heavily on promoting the regime's construction tasks. He thus suggested that a utopian commitment to individual transformation gave way to the goal of industrial transformation by the end of the 1920s.

---

[120] Ibid., xiv, xviii.
[121] Victoria Bonell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Plamper, *Stalin Cult*.
[122] Brooks, *Thank You*, xiii, p.9.

Lenoe's argument may be criticised, both for making conclusions that would be untenable if the time frame were expanded, and also for his unconvincing ministrations on behalf of the 'neo-traditionalist' school of Soviet history.

Nevertheless, his meticulous research methods are worthy of emulation. Alongside close analysis of the content of Soviet newspapers, Lenoe looked beyond the newspaper page and into the world outside. Borrowing his methodology from the sociology of cultural production, Lenoe analysed the newspaper as a cultural phenomenon by considering a "cultural diamond", which included the object itself, its creator(s), its audience, and its social context.[123] Thus Lenoe, while broadly agreeing with Brooks's main arguments, actually delivered a far more well-rounded account of changes in press content. By employing a new range of sources, from journals to archival documents, Lenoe, like Mueller and Gorham, provided a new set of questions for scholars to ask of the Soviet press, and a new set of tools with which to analyse them.

While the first half of the Soviet Union's existence has been amply covered, few studies have been devoted to the post-Stalin period – perhaps reflective of a discipline which has only started to engage with the post-Stalin period in the last decade. Thomas C. Wolfe's *Governing Soviet Journalism* (2005) was the first Anglophone work to do so, covering the broad sweep of history from 1953 until the 1990s. Employing what he self-deprecatingly called a "schizo-disciplinary" approach between history and anthropology, Wolfe examined the rise and fall of the journalist as educator, or rather, to use Wolfe's preferred term, as 'governor'.[124]

'Governing', he claimed, was a question of enlightenment. Drawing on Michel Foucault, Wolfe suggested that power in the Soviet Union did not just reside with the political elite, but also with figures like journalists, who used their social position to transmit a vision of the Soviet individual to the public. This model of governance began to break down after Khrushchev's ouster. The

[123] Lenoe, p.3.
[124] Wolfe, p.18.

Brezhnev leadership's desire for control over the form and content of journalistic expression meant that journalists' governing role was curbed. When it returned under Gorbachev, journalists were no longer interested in furthering the cause of socialism, but rather in burying it. However, in market conditions, journalists were expected to become purveyors of sensationalism rather than moral guides, leading to the mutation of their 'governing' role.

In recasting the thorny problematic of the relationship between journalists and authorities as a question of governing, Wolfe suggested that binary distinctions between ruler and ruled did not always reflect reality, insofar as journalists identified with the Party's requirements, and disseminated them to the public. This study endorses Wolfe's key finding that journalists played a key role in setting the moral co-ordinates of the Khrushchev era. Yet it seeks to add historical meat to the anthropological bones of Wolfe's argument by examining journalists in their wider social context, seeing them less as 'governors' and, somewhat more prosaically, more as a part of the party's propaganda apparatus in a changing ideological climate, with all the contradictions that this entailed. Wolfe dealt almost exclusively in the plans and goals of Soviet journalism, and much less in the question of how successfully they were carried out. By contrast, this study, through its focus on the day-to-day work of the press shows how the narrative that former Soviet journalists present today – one of ethical principles and the promotion of thought – is not always borne out by close examination of their debates.

The thesis also seeks to challenge Wolfe's back-door canonisation of the 'greats' of Soviet journalism, such as KP and *Izvestiia* editor Aleksei Adzhubei and sketch-writer Anatolii Agranovskii. Wolfe appears to have all-too-readily swallowed the dominant individual-led narrative of Soviet journalism put forward in interviews and canonised in today's Russian journalism textbooks. This study, by examining journalists own thoughts about the profession, uttered in the paper's weekly editorial *letuchki*, shows that Soviet journalism was a far more collective endeavour than Wolfe suggests.

The fall of the Soviet Union also allowed Russian researchers to reassess the subject outside constricting Marxist-Leninist paradigms. A number of important volumes of interview and primary source material have been published, greatly enhancing our understanding of the way the Soviet press functioned.[125] However, aside from studies of censorship, very few analyses of Soviet journalism – and those mostly produced in journalism faculties as textbooks – have been published.[126] These studies have generally posited a rigid binary distinction pitting heroic journalist against repressive regime.

Stanislav Gol'dfarb's 2008 history of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* provides a case in point.[127] The book provides a wealth of invaluable information, including memoir material from the paper's own archive, which was destroyed in a fire in 2006. However, his narrative too often chooses facts over analysis. As the story moves into the 1950s and 1960s, the veil of scholarly objectivity disappears almost entirely, with page upon page of quotations from journalists' memoirs without commentary, meaning that Gold'farb's narrative overlaps with journalists' own, becoming a celebration of the "special spirit of the sixth floor" rather than a sustained historical analysis (hardly surprising, given that the book appears to have been commissioned as an official history).[128]

This parade of the great and the good is an ailment afflicting much Russian-language scholarship. In proclaiming a veritable *kul't lichnostei*, such studies obfuscate the real social and cultural processes at work in Soviet journalism. However, given the widespread lack of attention devoted in the West to the creative aspects of Soviet journalism, such studies perform a useful

---

[125] Amongst them Semina, *Bol'she*; Mamleev, *Adzhubei v koridorakh*; *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000). Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty,* ed. by A.I. Volkov et al. (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000); *Zhurnalisty XX veka: Liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003).

[126] N.L. Volkovskii, *Otechestvennaia zhurnalistika, 1950-2000. Uchebnoe posobie. Chast' 1* (St.Petersburg: Izd. Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2006); R. P. Ovsepian, *Istoriia noveishei otechestvennoi zhurnalistiki* (Moscow: MGU / Nauka, 2005). On censorship: Arlen Blium, *Kak eto delalos' v Leningrade: tzenzura v gody ottepeli, zastoia i perestroiki* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2005); Tat'iana Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v SSSR: 1917-1991 gg. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2009).

[127] Gold'farb, *Istoriia KP*.

[128] Gol'dfarb, pp.309, 317. When working in the archives, Gol'dfarb listed his institutional affiliation as 'KP'.

function. By drawing readers' attention to the 'golden pens' of Soviet journalism, such as Boris Gorbatov, Mikhail Kol'tsov, and Valentin Ovechkin, these studies remind us that, while the creative aspects of the profession suffered greatly, something called 'journalism' nevertheless remained.

4.1 The Press and the Party

According to one journalism textbook of the period, the Soviet press was a Party press "because, in reflecting the idea of the Party, it reflects the interests of the people".[129] The many thousands of newspapers and journals in the Soviet Union represented a particular branch of the Party apparatus. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, or 'Komsomol', joined other central newspapers like *Pravda* (the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party) and *Izvestiia* (the Council of Workers' Deputies) in representing branches of the main party apparatus. Beneath them existed a network of smaller newspapers, representing the Soviet republics, towns or regions, right down to the so-called *mnogotirazhniki*, which represented factories, farms, or enterprises.

Soviet journalists were expected to follow the interests of their particular organisation, and take instructions from them. Newspapers produced long-term "perspective plans" for the authorities weeks and months in advance, listing articles that would be published on certain key themes or campaigns, such as industry and agriculture, moral and ethical themes, Marxist-Leninist ideology, or a Party drive against drunkenness.[130] KP's editors gave frequent account to the Komsomol of how their work was satisfying its concerns, and failure to fulfil its requirements could be grounds for disciplinary action. This thesis makes use of documents from the Agitation and Propaganda Departments

[129] N. Bogdanov, B. Viazemskii, *Spravochnik zhurnalista. 2-e izd.* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1965), p.30.

[130] Although I did not find any monthly plans in the KP archive, they were probably still produced. These plans are contained in *Sovetskaia Rossiia*'s archive, however, e.g. 'Svodnyi plan redaktsii gazety Sovetskaia Rossiia na fevral'-mart 1960 g.', RGANI, f.96, op.1, d.22, ll.59-76. For a KP weekly plan see RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.267, ll.8-17.

of both the Komsomol (contained in RGASPI-M) and the Party, contained in the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), which illustrate the significant pressures that were placed on journalists to conform to the Party's instructions.

General instructions, describing the overall priorities and principles of the Soviet press might be aired at Party Congresses, in Central Committee resolutions, or in editorials in prominent newspapers, especially *Pravda*. Since journalists and editors were part of the Party apparatus (the Editor-in-Chief was a member of the Komsomol's Central Committee, too) regular meetings of the Party Organisation were held at the paper to discuss these goals.[131] The transcripts of these wide-ranging discussions, at KP and at other major newspapers, are employed in this thesis. More specific instructions were provided by 'press reviews', in which journalists examined the work of newspapers that represented ministries or committees below them in the Party hierarchy, or by articles printed in *Sovetskaia pechat'*, the official organ of the Union of Journalists.

The Komsomol took the lead in transmitting instructions to *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. It kept tabs on the everyday work of the paper, and was the main contact for issues as minor as sanatorium provision for editorial staff or as major as the appointment of senior staff (though officials increasingly sought to involve the paper's collective in such decisions).[132] When David Novoplianskii wanted permission to write about hooliganism, it was Shelepin, the Komsomol's general secretary, whom editor Dmitrii Goriunov called.[133] When the paper prepared an article on US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's refusal to allow Americans to travel to the 1957 Youth Festival, it was Shelepin himself who got out the red pencil to edit the article.[134]

---

[131] In 1957, of 111 of 129 staff members (86 per cent) were members or candidate members of the Party or Komsomol. 'Svedeniia o komsomol'skikh gazetakh', 1957, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.847, ll.48, 61-63.
[132] Il'ia Shatunovskii, 'Sdelal bol'she, chem mog, no men'she, chem khotel' in *Adzhubei v koridorakh*, p.44.
[133] Goriunov to Shelepin, 5/7/55, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.155, ll.60-64.
[134] KP to Shelepin, 12/3/57, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.847, ll.147-149.

But, reflecting the Central Committee's control over the Komsomol, KP was also subject to direct supervision from the Party. Official events, such as anniversaries, Plenums, or May Day, were directed by Agit-Prop, which specified how much material should be printed and when.[135] The Party also directed the flow of material for certain news events (for example, when US spy pilot Gary Powers was tried in 1960).[136] Direct instructions were received from Agit-Prop 'curators', who checked the content of the newspapers under their purview, and passed on instructions from politicians. There was also regular contact between regime and editor through the private Kremlin telephone system, or *vertushka*.[137]

However, while the regime's instructions provided a *framework* for press content, only in cases with a bearing on high politics (like the article on Dulles cited above) did the regime directly specify what should be written, though editors might sometimes seek approval for controversial items. And though the censorship organ Glavlit retained considerable power, after Stalin's death it mainly functioned as a means for maintaining military secrecy rather than policing areas of ideological uncertainty.[138] Journalists and editors were now expected to exercise their own judgement over the suitability of an article. This was a move from pre-publication prescription of content to post-publication verification, where editors knew that if the *vertushka* didn't ring before 11am, the paper had passed muster with the Politburo.[139] As the former Head of Agit-Prop, Aleksandr Iakovlev, said in an interview:

> Don't think that heads of newspapers were constantly asking higher organs something. Newspapers simply came out. Moreover, there was a secret rule: don't try to ask. Much was established on personal relationships. If I had a good relationship with the Editor-in-Chief, I agreed with him that he didn't have to constantly wait for instructions: you could publish most things at your own discretion.[140]

---

[135] See RGANI, f.5, op.33, d.138, ll.70, 75, 143, 145, 146, 149.
[136] Ibid., l.135.
[137] Lilita Dzirkals, Thane Gustafson, A. Ross Johnson, 'The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR' Rand Corporation Report R-2869 (Santa Monica, CA, 1982), pp.14-18.
[138] 9/11/59, d.253, ll.7-8, 26-27; Hopkins, pp.128-129.
[139] Lev Korneshov, 'Ia ee liubil. A ona menia?' in *Bol'she*, p.154.
[140] Volkova, p.354. See also Korneshov, p.157.

Editors had to answer for their actions, as we will see, but the difference between this flexibility and the overcautiousness that reigned under Stalin is striking.

4.2 Structure of the *Komsomol'skaia pravda redaktsiia*

The editorial office [редакция] was one of three main administrative divisions of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. Alongside it were the printing plant [типография], which was run through *Pravda*, and the publishing house [издательство], which liaised with the Soviet distributor, Union Press [Союзпечать] to deliver the paper to readers. At the heart of the *redaktsiia* were the editor's office and the *secretariat* (see Figure 1, page 55). The Editor-in-Chief fulfilled a range of functions, from liaison with Party authorities to approving controversial stories and looking after staff welfare. The Responsible Secretary also played a significant role at the paper, particularly in dealing with everyday liaison with the Party. Beneath this level, there were a number of departments responsible for editorial content, headed by 'Editors' or 'Heads' of Department. Beneath them were their deputies, and a number of correspondents. Departmental Editors joined the Editor-in-Chief, Deputy Editor, and Responsible Secretaries on the Editorial Board [редколлегия], which held a daily planning meeting [планерка], in which the material for the next day's paper was decided.[141]

On Mondays, this *planerka* was preceded by an editorial '*letuchka*', held in the paper's 'Blue Hall' and open to all staff, where the previous week's published material was discussed by a designated reviewer, before the floor was opened. These meetings contained frank exchanges of views about the paper's priorities, frequently turning into wide-ranging discussions on the future direction of the paper, or the nation as a whole. Recordings of these meetings were typed up by one of the paper's stenographers, before being placed in the

[141] Sadly for researchers, only protocols, rather than transcripts, of these meetings were produced.

paper's archive; a copy also went to the Komsomol's Central Committee.[142] These latter transcripts are held in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History in Moscow. They enable us to understand how journalists viewed their profession in their own words, in the language they were using at the time; this thesis is the first to use them systematically.[143]

To be sure, these sources do not offer us transparent access to journalists' thoughts and cannot be used uncritically. *Letuchki* are best thought of as 'publicly private' spaces, where opinions could be exchanged, identities formed, and priorities outlined. The fact that journalists' comments could eventually reach Komsomol officials illustrates the semi-public nature of these meetings. However, the range of views expressed in such meetings shows that many journalists did not hold back in expressing their thoughts and there is evidence to suggest that journalists nevertheless considered such meetings to be a private space, an "editorial secret".[144] For this reason, they provide a window onto the professional world of the Soviet journalist in the 1950s and 1960s – one that allows us to hear journalists speak about their profession in their own words.

5 Overview

The thesis comprises five thematic chapters, each of which provides a history of a particular aspect of the paper's work. By essaying a thematic focus, this thesis forgoes an attempt to provide a comprehensive history of the paper, and instead uses a new set of sources to make a sustained argument about Soviet journalists, their relationship with the public, and their attempts to find new forms of journalism for a post-Stalinist age. While the thesis analyses journalists' relationship with readers, comprehensive study of how *audiences*

---

[142] Vera Benderova, 'Sol' chuzhikh slez', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5*, ed. by B. S. Burkov and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), p.335.
[143] Susan Costanzo employed transcripts from late 1959 for her article 'The 1959 Liriki-Fiziki Debate: Going Public With the Private?', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp.251–68.
[144] RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.107, l.22; Iurii A. Poliakov, *Istoricheskaia nauka: liudi i problemy* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999), pp.307-308.

viewed the press has not been possible because of a lack of sources. It is also important to note that this is a case study of a single Moscow-based newspaper – one where journalists were well-trained and highly motivated – and is thus not reflective of the full range of experiences of Soviet journalists after Stalin's death.[145] Nevertheless, what the thesis lacks in breadth, it gains in depth: by focusing on a single newspaper it has been possible to examine the changing values and beliefs of journalists, and the contradictions of their work, in far greater empirical detail than any previous study.

Chapter One examines the concept of 'criticism and self-criticism' from late Stalinism until the late-1960s. The chapter shows how the Twentieth Party Congress prompted journalists to reassess their social role by placing the protection of Soviet citizens from bureaucracy and lawlessness at the heart of their work. However, in the face of worrying social developments and a strained international situation, the regime became increasingly concerned about the divisive effects of journalistic muckraking, and began to criticise KP's apparently dangerous articles. This was a demonstration of the long-lasting tension between the transformative role of press criticism and its perceived erosive effects. Under Brezhnev, these tensions were exacerbated. Journalists once again attempted to condemn social shortcomings in the name of progress, but came up against a regime keen to maintain a positive façade.

Chapter Two looks at Soviet journalists' changing concepts of 'news'. It shows how the development of Soviet news was dictated by two competing factors as the demand that the press describe the 'positive' in Soviet life conflicted with the audience's demand for objective, up-to-date news. In a climate of escalating

[145] On the minority-language press see Kathryn Graber, 'Public Information: The Shifting Roles of Minority-Language News Media in the Buryat Territories of Russia' *Language and Communication* 32 (2012), 124-136. On regional press see R.V. Dautova, 'Rol' sredstv massovoi informatsii v kul'turnom vzaimoobmene v period Khrushchevskoi 'ottepeli'' *Uchebnye zapiski Kazanskogo universiteta. Seriia: Gumanitarnye nauki* 152/5 (2010), 91-100; Steven Kotkin, *Steeltown USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), pp.39-75.

propaganda competition – and especially the increased accessibility of foreign radio stations like Voice of America and the BBC – the regime demanded that journalists rival the timeliness of western information. However, with the regime unwilling to loosen restrictions on reporting, the Prague Spring persuaded the regime that jamming provided an easier solution than eliminating political constraints.

Chapter Three discusses the rhetoric of the Soviet 'positive hero' after the Secret Speech. Focusing on a single rubric, "Letters, Notebooks, and Diaries of Our Contemporaries", a feature in which readers' own personal documents were printed as examples to be emulated, the chapter examines the way in which journalists attempted to mould the figure of the contemporary hero. Editorial discussions show that, despite its popularity, the rubric exposed disagreements over the meaning of the Communism that Khrushchev hoped to build by 1980. As Khrushchev-era *romantika* gave way to the sobriety of the Brezhnev era, the figure of the contemporary hero reached crisis point, with journalists beginning to view the ascetic heroes of the past as dangerously primitive for a technocratic age.

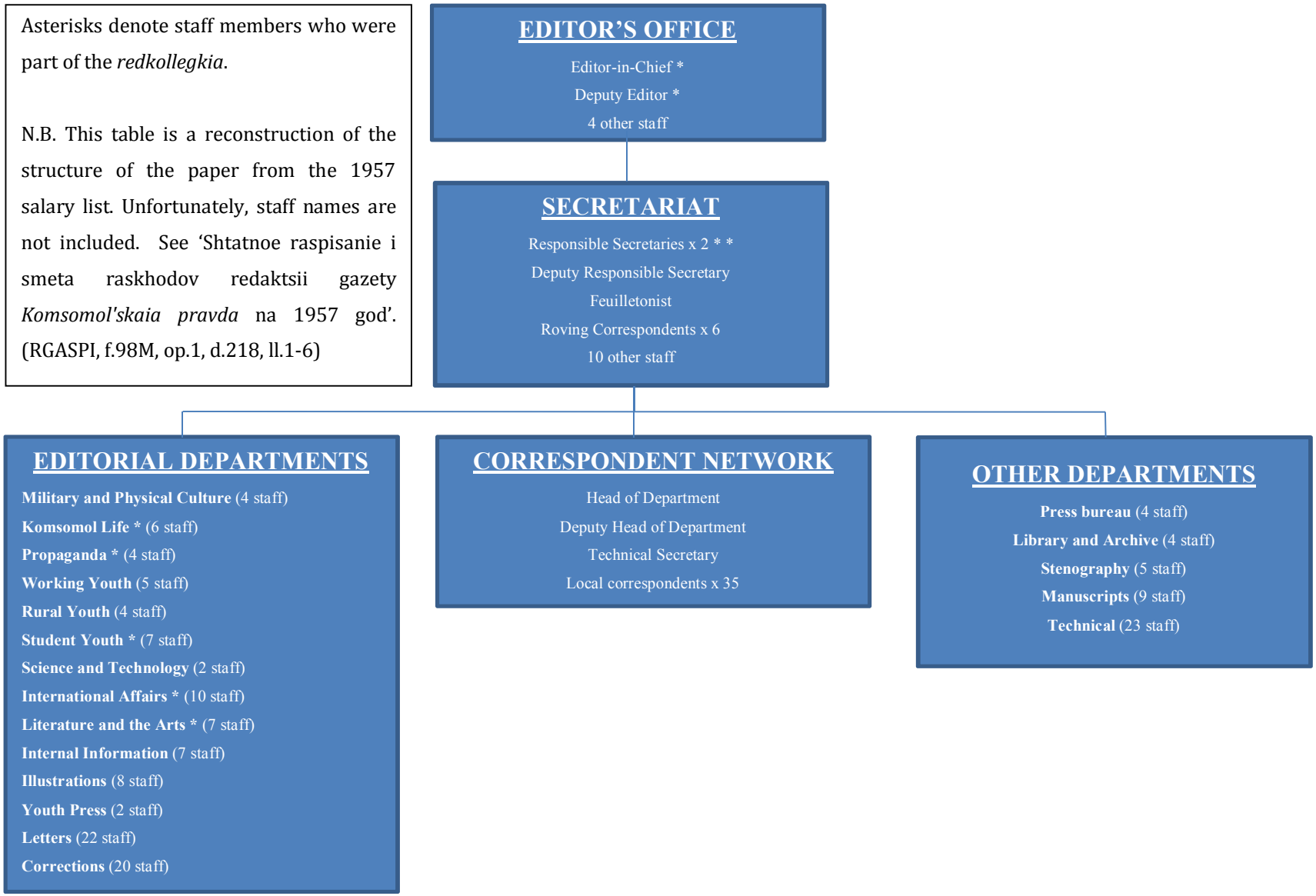
Chapter Four discusses one of the paper's most ambitious initiatives of the period: the founding of a sociological research institute, called the Institute of Public Opinion. Founded in May 1960 by the head of the paper's Propaganda Department, Boris Grushin, the Institute initially suggested that citizens' attitude towards social reality was as positive as propaganda had always painted it. For that reason, early polls were met rapturously by the paper's journalists. But as soon as Grushin reoriented the Institute towards scientific investigation of social problems, the paper's journalists turned against it. Despite the patronage of the regime, journalists were unwilling to indulge the work of an Institute whose surveys were increasingly difficult to utilise for propaganda purposes, suggesting that the adherence of KP journalists to the Brezhnev leadership's technocratic agenda had limits.

Chapter Five looks at journalistic discourses surrounding the reader. By examining two main initiatives to which the paper gave its support, the chapter shows how journalists sought to mould model citizens. Firstly, the paper provided support for 'discussion clubs', which extolled the virtues of independent thought, and secondly, it provided support to the 'Communard' movement, a grassroots pedagogical initiative which sought to overcome the staidness of official Komsomol and Pioneer meetings by promoting youth creativity. However, the introduction of market principles in 1965 prompted decisive changes. Newspapers were now judged on their popularity with readers, and sought to learn about their audience by commissioning sociological studies and convening reader conferences. As a result, the relationship between journalist and reader changed decisively: no longer was the reader simply a potential citizen to be moulded and educated, but also a consumer to be won over.

FIGURE 1: *KOMSOMOL'SKAIA PRAVDA* EDITORIAL STRUCTURE, 1957

Asterisks denote staff members who were part of the *redkollegkia*.

N.B. This table is a reconstruction of the structure of the paper from the 1957 salary list. Unfortunately, staff names are not included. See 'Shtatnoe raspisanie i smeta raskhodov redaktsii gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda* na 1957 god'. (RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.218, ll.1-6)



CHAPTER 1 | **Shortcomings: The Limits of Press Criticism Before and After Stalin**

For journalists, nothing and everything changed after the Twentieth Party Congress. Nothing changed because their work was still supposed to bolster the Party's standing, and expected to remain within the parameters of the prevailing ideology. Journalists were still subject to sanction should these goals not be met. They remained the party's "assistants", as Khrushchev would famously tell them a few years later. But everything changed, too. Newspapers became more lively and thoughtful, and more challenging to social ills. Journalists began to speak more freely, criticising negative tendencies within society on the basis of their understanding of the public good.

The role of the Twentieth Party Congress on Soviet journalism has been much discussed in the literature, but a more exact formulation of its impact is lacking. Thomas C. Wolfe quotes journalists who suggest that the defence of the "little man" was one of the period's defining characteristics.[1] However, he does not delve deeper into the nature of this defence of the individual, or investigate how commitment to the public this played out in a nation where democratic checks and balances on power were lacking, and journalists were under severe pressure, not only to speak out on violations of discipline, but also to maintain a sense of social stability. This chapter, which spans the period from late Stalinism to the Prague Spring, focuses on the role of the Secret Speech in establishing a new set of norms for so-called 'criticism and self-criticism', examining in particular two pivotal periods: the year following the Secret Speech and the aftermath of Khrushchev's ouster. Drawing on a number of case studies, the chapter shows how criticism became central to journalists' understanding of their social role, but also how the regime recoiled from its erosive consequences. Thus, this chapter suggests that there was a tension between the newspaper's role as an organ of stability, and as an organ of

[1] Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Soviet Person After Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), xvii-xix; pp.34-35.

transformation. Both were considered to be essential functions of the Soviet press, but they often acted in discordance, leading to frequent conflicts between journalists and Party organs.

The third edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1973) contains the following definition of the term:

> **Criticism and Self-Criticism** is a method for uncovering the contradictions of social development, a necessary side of material and spiritual action; one of the basic principles of revolutionary transformational activity of Marxist-Leninist parties – and, in a socialist society, of the whole people – one of the motivating forces of the development of a socialist society; a principle of moral education, self-education, and spiritual development of people. The essence of criticism and self-criticism consists in cognition and discovery of a given form of contradiction, error and shortcomings, arising for objective or subjective reasons in the course of social practice, with the goal of overcoming it.[2]

Exposés of the behaviour of errant factory bosses and lampooning of corrupt bureaucrats ostensibly helped to ensure that no-one was above the law, and ensured the "revolutionary transformation" of Soviet society. After 1956 criticism – both within the press and in wider society – was seen as a means for rooting out the remnants of the cult of personality.[3] It was made possible by the renunciation of terror, as well as a growing uncertainty amongst the political elite about the direction of the press, which left the door open for journalists to interpret the significance of the Congress for themselves.

However, it rapidly became clear that public exposure of officials' misdemeanours threatened public trust in governmental institutions. 1956 was witness not only to the Twentieth Party Congress, but also unrest in Hungary and Poland, discontent within the student body, and a long-standing problem with hooliganism. By the end of the year, the combination of these elements seemed to endanger Soviet power, with the paper's critical articles coming to be seen as dangerously iconoclastic. Despite the regime's ostensible commitment

---

[2] 'Kritika i samokritika', *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 3-e izd. Tom 13* (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1973), p.452.

[3] On criticism within a factory setting see Susanne Schattenberg, ''Democracy' or 'despotism'? How the Secret Speech was Translated into Everyday Life' in *Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Polly Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.64-79.

to exposing bureaucratic misdeeds, the exposure of shortcomings was forced to take a back-seat to the politically expedient. This was illustrated even more starkly under Brezhnev, at which point the punishments for overstepping acceptable boundaries became harsher.[4]

1 The Press under Late Stalinism

From the very beginning of Soviet power, criticism and self-criticism was seen as essential to the smooth running of the social order. Lenin is said to have seen it as the mark of a serious political party while Stalin believed that "without self-criticism there is no correct education of the party, of the class, of the masses; without correct education of the party, the class, of the masses, there is no Bolshevism".[5] According to the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*, published in 1953,

> Daily principled criticism and self-criticism strengthens the proletarian party, raises the vigilance of party members, protects the party from bourgeois influences, and helps to cleanse it of enemies in its ranks, and also from opportunistic and unstable elements.[6]

A press day editorial in 1952 proclaimed that "Newspapers make wide use of a tried-and-tested method of Communist education of workers: criticism and self-criticism, they castigate all that is sluggish and obsolete, helping to fight the survivals of capitalism in people's consciousness".[7]

Yet, judged by their content, it is difficult to imagine that the newspapers of the late-Stalin era played any substantial role in surmounting shortcomings.

---

[4] A note on sources: in this chapter, much of the material comes from archival sources, including editorial letuchki, Party Organisation meetings, and the documents of Agit-Prop within the Komsomol and Party. However, in places it has proved difficult to follow the archival paper trail into the various ministries and Party organisations scattered around the country. For this reason, this chapter relies on eye-witness accounts of events by journalists and political figures. Although these cannot be considered to be as accurate as archival records, they nevertheless allow us to reconstruct the consequences of journalists' critical articles, as well as revealing behind-the-scenes insights absent in archival documents.

[5] S. Dudel', 'Kritika i samokritika', in *Filosofskaia entsiklopediia. Tom 3* , ed. by F.V. Konstantinov (Moscow: Izd. "Sovetskaia entsiklopediia", 1964), pp.94-95; 'Kritika i samokritika', in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 2-e izd. Tom 23* (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1953), p.515.

[6] 'Kritika i samokritika' in *BSE. 2-e izd.*, p.515.

[7] 'Glashatai partii' *Ogonek* 4/5/52, 4.

While barely a week went by without commemoration of some seemingly momentous anniversary, such as Stalin's seventieth birthday in 1949, or ceremonial events like Stalin's nomination to be elected to the Supreme Soviet, there was little room for critical materials. What materials existed tended to concentrate on a narrow circle of tried-and-tested themes. If we consider consolidation and transformation to be the two poles of the Soviet press, then it would seem that its role under Stalin – despite the officially stated values – was heavily biased towards the former. Newspapers were less concerned with changing Soviet society (though they paid lip service to the ideal), as with ensuring the regime's continued survival against perceived threats both internal and external.[8]

However, in their editorial meetings, journalists expressed a belief that the press should condemn negative social tendencies. In an editorial *letuchka* in 1950, *Izvestiia* journalist Kudrevatykh argued:

> We know of a number of facts from the life of certain town which speak of the presence of bureaucratism, a detachment from the masses, etc. If the necessity of a struggle against bureaucratism, against detachment from the masses, and in favour of self-criticism in our Soviet organs, was more clearly underlined in our editorials it would be more valuable and, moreover, it would show how we raise in the paper the question of the implementation of self-criticism.[9]

KP journalists expressed their approval of the newspaper when it printed articles that "bravely criticised, without taking account of rank".[10] These ideas were entirely within the framework of the regime's official values, as we have seen. But there was also frustration that journalists' critical articles were not supported by the authorities.

At a speech commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the paper, Editor-in-Chief Dmitrii Goriunov argued:

> The reader does not want to put up with a lack of ideas, bureaucratism, over-administration, poor work of all types…. If we have in mind that criticism and self-criticism is not a fashion, not a campaign, but a permanently acting weapon

[8] Leonid T. Trofimov, 'The Soviet Media at the Onset of the Cold War, 1945-50'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2004; A.V. Fateev, *Obraz vraga v sovetskoi propaganda, 1945-1954 gg.* (Moscow: RAN, 1999).
[9] *Izvestiia* letuchka, 2/1/50, GARF, f.1244R, op.1, d.96, ll.1-2.
[10] 2/1/50, d.87, ll.106-107, 129.

> of Bolshevism, a vitally necessary condition for our development, then one must recognise that we still print too few critical materials. Some of the paper's critical materials are superficial; they are insufficient to penetrate deeply into the essence of the matter. Sometimes a trenchant phrase replaces thoughtful analysis, convincing argumentation, proof, the incontestable logic of facts.[11]

The paper's well-known satirical writer Semen Narin'iani argued that the Central Committee of the Komsomol was to blame for failing to support criticism, complaining that "we're always afraid of the Central Committee, that they'll scold us instead of praising us" adding that "there are many cases in which the Central Committee calls in the Secretary and takes a decision regardless of the facts, however trivial they are. In certain trivial facts the Central Committee even sees anti-governmental tendencies …"[12] Thus, although the official line was to support "criticism and self-criticism", in reality, the authorities sought to stamp it out. Journalists, meanwhile, had an expectation that criticism would be supported, and condemned the authorities if they did not do so.

While criticism and self-criticism were enshrined as official goals in theory, in practice, these were overwritten by other, more conservative values. Constant supervision through day-to-day contacts between editors and journalists and representatives of the state were combined with a series of formal mechanisms of control, such as censorship, regular verification through state bodies such as Agit-Prop, and ideological meetings to ensure conformity. However, though this suggests regularity in state-press relations, the period was actually characterised by a high level of uncertainty insofar as regular and unpredictable changes in the political climate could lead to negative consequences for journalists. Journalists' main role in this period was not to agitate for change, but to relate the Party line accurately and faithfully. One journalist writing in the early 1960s recalled publishing an article about a new industrial technique, but was accused of "kow-towing before the bourgeois order" and nationalism for deviating from the established script.[13] The

---

[11] 'Tekst vystupleniia glavnogo redaktora gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda* tov. D. Goriunov v sviazi s 25-letiem gazety' May 1950, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.98, l.9.
[12] Closed Party Meeting, 23/1/50, d.25, l.2.
[13] G. Zimanas, 'Printsipial'nost', pravdivost', nastupatel'nost'' *Sovetskaia pechat'* (SP) 2 (1962), 8.

newspaper was a vehicle through which readers received information that they *needed* to know, rather than the information that they were interested in. Journalists adopted an ultra-cautious attitude, seeking above all to avoid the slightest ambiguity, rather than to innovate.[14] In 1985, Dmitrii Goriunov, KP's Editor-in-Chief between 1950 and 1957, recalled it as a time when "any independent thought was considered almost as dangerous ad-libbing [отсебятина], when all efforts were directed towards retelling what had already been said, as far as possible without retreating from what had already been said one little bit".[15] Staff members were forced to attend conferences with titles like "On exactitude and correctness", and minor errors were routinely discussed in editorial meetings.[16] It is telling that the largest editorial department at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was the Department of Corrections, which numbered twenty workers.[17] Any significant change would have to wait until after Stalin's death.

2 1956 and the Creation of a New Model

To understand the importance of criticism to the post-1956 KP, it is necessary to briefly sketch out the atmosphere after 1953. The period between the death of Stalin and the Secret Speech did not lead to any great shift in content, as this 1954 quotation from Vasilii Khomus'kov, the Head of KP's Military Department suggests:

> Every week it becomes harder and harder to speak here… Harder and harder because our newspaper columns look worse and worse; at times trivial, content-less material finds itself in columns, so the role of the responsible critic, especially recently, is extremely ignoble. … Some responsible critics speak with

[14] Jan Plamper, 'Abolishing Ambiguity: Soviet Censorship Practices in the 1930s' *Russian Review* 60/4 (October 2001), pp.526-544; Il'ia Shatunovskii, *Zapiski strelianogo vorob'ia* (Moscow: Voskresen'e, 2003), p.44.
[15] Dmitrii Goriunov, 'Delo vsei zhizni', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5*, ed. by B. S. Burkov and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), p.56.
[16] For example: 2/1/50, d.87, ll.132-133; 4/6/51, d.107, l.16; 'Otchetnyi doklad partbiuro redaktsii *Komsomol'skaia pravda* o rabote, prodelannoi s ianvaria 1951 g. po mart 1952 g.', 10 March 1952, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.27, l.16.
[17] 'Shtatnoe raspisanii redaktsii gazety KP na 1950 g.', 27 April 1950, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.99, l.6.

> suggestions … But the problem is that these good thoughts, these good suggestions are very weakly reflected in our newspaper columns.[18]

Khomus'kov's comments point to two contradictory elements in this period: green shoots of recovery in the guise of debates and initiatives; clear signs of inertia when it came to their implementation. While the cult had been jettisoned, journalists remained unable to produce a compelling vision of the post-Stalin newspaper. As Nikolai Koroteev, the paper's former front line correspondent, argued: "every edition is to some extent always a repetition of the thoughts which we expressed in previous editions, but in terms of development … we haven't gone any further".[19] The fact that the late Stalin era had not bequeathed attractive models for emulation was one factor. A second significant hurdle was fear. Journalists had historically been unwilling to act without the say-so of the regime, leading them to mimic the tried-and-tested forms that had been rewarded under Stalin.

However, there were signs of change. The Leninist demand that the press should go "closer to life" was frequently invoked as an argument for moving away from the dream-like world of the Stalin cult, and towards the day-to-day issues that concerned readers.[20] A critical review of the paper's work published in *Pravda* in May 1953 demanded that the paper widen its appeal to readers and become "closer to life" by printing more material about ordinary Soviet citizens.[21] That same year, an account of the paper's work produced by the paper's Party organisation suggested that "A connection with life is the obligation of the journalist".[22] Almost anything, no matter what the subject, seemed to imply that the paper needed to go closer to life, and to the public: Beria's arrest suggested to Semen Garbuzov, the paper's Responsible Secretary, that "for improving the work of the editorial team it is necessary to strengthen links with readers, with the masses".[23]

---

[18] 13/9/54, d.131, ll.38-39.
[19] 6/9/54, d.131, l.1,2.
[20] V.I. Lenin, 'O kharaktere nashikh gazet' *Pravda* 20/9/18, 1.
[21] 'Byt' drugom i nastavnikom molodezhi', *Pravda*, 22/5/53, 2.
[22] 'Otchetnyi doklad partiinogo biuro za period s marta 1953 goda po avgust 1953 g.', 1953, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.28, l.59.
[23] Closed Party Meeting, 13/7/53, d.28, l.36.

Readers' letters played an important role in this process. They allowed journalists to maintain contact with readers, answer their queries, and deal with their cries for help.[24] Though the newspaper was somewhat overwhelmed by the responsibility of reading, recording, and responding to this mountain of letters, it was through the paper's postbag that the idea of the "protection of the individual" against all manner of corruption, bureaucratism and arbitrariness took shape after Khrushchev's speech.

The attack on Stalin's 'cult of personality' at the Twentieth Party Congress marks the boundary between 'Stalinist' and 'post-Stalinist' journalism. It was the moment when the reformist possibilities of the previous few years crystallised. For this reason, before beginning our discussion of the development of criticism and self-criticism after the Congress, it is necessary to examine the context into which this critical line emerged.

Although newspapers had made vague references to the *kul't lichnosti* between 1953 and early 1956, Stalin's position within Soviet mythology was officially unchallenged.[25] His fall from the Party pantheon was therefore an enormous shock for Soviet citizens and damaged the myth of Party infallibility, connected to the notion that it embodied some eternal, scientific truth.[26] The speech was an act of explicit criticism, and implicit self-criticism. The very fact that it admitted Party errors suggested the possibility that discussion of other errors, other problems, was now possible. And by revealing Stalin's violence towards its cadres, the speech suggested that the era of reprisals was over. One journalist at *Izvestiia* admitted how he kept quiet about his doubts over the arrests of colleagues, and said of the cult: "We felt that Stalin was being deified,

---

[24] The newspaper received 18,340 complaints about various aspects of Soviet life in 1955. 'Spravka o kharaktere pochty gazety', 1956, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.178, l.56.

[25] D.M Fel'dman, *Terminologiia vlasti: Sovetskie politicheskie terminy v istoriko-kul'turnom kontekste* (Moscow: Rosiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2006), pp.54-66; J. Shapiro, 'The Soviet Press and the Problem of Stalin' *Studies in Comparative Communism* 4/3-4 (1971), 179-209.

[26] On reactions see Polly Jones, "I've Held, and I Still Hold, Stalin in the Highest Esteem': Discourses and Strategies of Resistance to De-Stalinisation in the USSR, 1953–62', in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by Balázs Apor et al. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), pp.227–45; Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp.79-105; Vladimir A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*. Trans., Ed. by Elaine McClarnand MacKinnon (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp.112-135.

but we stayed silent, we were afraid to say so. We were on bended knee before one man".[27] Another journalist at the paper claimed that the Congress's decisions meant that the Soviet people were "freed from fear".[28] Journalists and editors were now allowed breathing space in which to rethink the Soviet press's future. Mistakes did not go unpunished, but they no longer attracted as severe a sanction as they had in the past. Moreover, the regime's demands – at least until the end of 1956 – were frequently ambiguous.

Although the Speech did not name the press directly, the attack on the Stalin cult placed the spotlight firmly on its purveyors, which of course included journalists. The immediate post-Congress period was thus a time for self-criticism, for reassessing priorities, and for settling old scores. At *Izvestiia* in particular, Editor-in-Chief Konstantin Gubin's high-handed style was roundly condemned by colleagues, who clearly relished the opportunity to voice what they had previously stayed silent about. One journalist mentioned colleagues' complaints about Gubin's lack of interest in their work, a criticism that the editor brushed off, before warning that it would be unwise to "completely negate the achievements of I.V. Stalin". He added: "If we completely negated his positive role, then it would be impossible to understand how the cult of personality was created".[29] His staff reacted badly to this, asserting that Gubin's "unhealthy attitude to criticism is one manifestation of the consequences of the cult of personality".[30] Others followed up, complaining that any ideas for change were never put into practice because of his leadership.[31] Even at *Pravda*, Shepilov was subject to criticism, albeit milder, for his lack of attention to the paper's work.[32]

The atmosphere at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was comparatively calmer, perhaps because an atmosphere of creative discussion already existed there. Nevertheless, the sense of shock was no less palpable. "I have a very difficult task. I don't know how I'll manage it," said Garbuzov at *Komsomol'skaia*

[27] *Izvestiia* Closed Party Meeting, 29-30/3/56, TsAOPIM, f.453, op.2, d.27, ll.16-17.
[28] Ibid., l.16.
[29] *Izvestiia* Closed Party Meeting, 29-30/3/56, TsAOPIM, f.453, op.2, d.27, ll.23-24.
[30] Ibid., l.30.
[31] Ibid., ll.31, 33.
[32] *Pravda* Closed Party Meeting, 27-28/4/1956, TsAOPIM, f.3226, op.1, d.54, l.14.

pravda's first post-Congress meeting, before adding that there was "a great deal to reconsider, many values to reappraise", and that the paper needed to "reject many certainties and habitual forms and find new ones". To think that the paper could do so quickly would be "ludicrous", he added.[33] It is telling that after this meeting, when comments were invited, the transcript indicates an unusual period of silence.[34]

If journalists were confused as to how to proceed, so were readers who, in the absence of an editorial on Stalin, were left confused by cryptic references to the cult of personality. What was the *kul't lichnosti*, asked the workers of one factory shop, and provided their own interpretation: "A prominent person comes along, i.e. a manager, and he never says 'hello', even though he's obliged to say 'hello'; people who want to show themselves to be better and more cultured than everyone else, and have suits and dresses made to order, etc." They asked journalists: "If you can, then please answer this question in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* or by letter whether we understood correctly or not".[35] But the paper was ill-placed to provide such answers, with Adzhubei admitting that finding a line on the cult of personality was a "very important task, but not a very simple one".[36] Complaints about a lack of direct engagement with the Twentieth Party Congress and its consequences were a familiar refrain in the months that followed.

But while journalists at the paper were unable to tackle the consequences of the Congress head on, its effects were nevertheless visible in terms of a significant shift in tone. It may be argued that, with the press still under Party supervision, such changes merely represented a sideshow to the main feature: the continued adherence of Soviet journalism to Party norms.[37] However, this is to miss the point: journalists did not see the Party as the problem. Rather, they sought to infuse Party resolutions with meaning.

---

[33] 5/3/56, d.170, ll.107-108.
[34] Ibid., l.116.
[35] 5/3/56, d.170, ll.124-126.
[36] Ibid., l.138. See also 21/5/56, d.172, l.65.
[37] As both Kristin Roth-Ey and Frank Ellis contend in their respective reviews of Wolfe's *Governing Soviet Journalism:* see Kristin Roth-Ey, Review of *Governing Soviet Journalism, Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/4 (2006), 894-898; Frank Ellis, Review of *Governing Soviet Journalism*, *Slavonic and East European Review*, 85/1 (2007), 165–67.

Nowhere was this clearer than in changing attitudes to criticism and self-criticism. As we have seen, the idea of the Soviet press as a campaigning press had always existed – and not only in theory. Even under Stalin when the press's critical role was diminished, journalists still believed that the paper's role in overcoming shortcomings was of major significance. After Stalin's death, there were attempts to create a more conducive atmosphere for criticism in the press. An important and much cited resolution of 1954 attacked the regional newspaper *Sovetskaia Chuvashiia* for its lack of criticism of the local Party, Soviet and council organs and its failure to pay attention to the signals of worker and peasant correspondents.[38] That same year, a second resolution reprimanded Party organs in Orlov *oblast'* for suppressing criticism.[39] In 1955, Khrushchev said of the press that:

> A newspaper worker does not have the right to avoid posing acute [острые] political questions. If one of the paper's workers is going to meet with mistakes which distort the party line and then, having discovered the real culprit, ignore them and change course [лавировать], that means newspaper work is not within his power, because such a line of work is not for cowards.[40]

Despite this encouragement, it was not until after Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Party Congress and the emergence of a spirit of 'socialist legality' that the spirit of criticism took centre stage. Around two months after the end of the Twentieth Congress, *Pravda* Editor-in-Chief Dmitrii Shepilov found fault with many aspects of the paper's work.[41] Journalist I.S. Pustovalov admitted that his department had failed to take on bureaucracy within ministries, central authorities, and administration. "We still don't have articles which would criticise a whole system of work of a certain ministry and its leaders … We don't go further with criticism of *raikoms* and *gorkoms*. This is our great mistake. We need to subject high-level organisations to criticism, too."[42] In Pustovalov's account, criticism appeared to be necessary in order to ensure the smoother

---

[38] 'O rabote gazety *Sovetskaia Chuvashiia*', March 1954 in *Sovetskaia pechat' v dokumentakh*, ed. by N. Kaminskaia (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961), pp.199-200.
[39] 'O faktakh zazhima kritiki v Kromskoi raionnoi partiinoi organizatsii Orlovskoi oblasti', January 1954 in Ibid., pp.283-284.
[40] N. Bogdanov, B. Viazemskii, *Spravochnik zhurnalista* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1960), pp.41-42.
[41] *Pravda* Closed Party Meeting, 27-28/4/56, TsAOPIM, f.3226, op.1, d.56, ll.13-24.
[42] Ibid., l.14. See also l.18.

running of Soviet bureaucracy, and to eliminate the remnants of the cult of personality.

At *Izvestiia*, there were similar calls for an end to the cult in industry:

> "My factory," says the Director; "My *oblast'*", says the Secretary of the *obkom*. In these words we hear the belittling of the role of the masses, and an attempt to attribute successes to one person. We need to dethrone *vozhd*-ism in the regions. […] We still have much bureaucratism. One of the reasons for that is the cult of personality. Bureaucratism appears in many forms, including a negligent attitude to the needs of individuals. For example, we've had our offices decorated, but the archive has a leaking from the ceiling, and the Soviet Department has a permanent noise from the ventilators. And how many letters reach the editorial offices with complaints about bureaucrats? We don't do a good job of struggling against bureaucrats through the newspaper.[43]

However, editorial debates suggest that such demands were not put into practice. Gubin eventually regained the upper hand, leading to a situation in which meetings were long and wordy but devoid of inspiration, let alone any iconoclastic energies. Suffice it to recall that in journalistic circles, the paper was described having been "Gubin-ed".[44]

At KP, there were similar calls for criticism, but they focused less on industry, and more closely on everyday injustices. Immediately after the Congress, Vladimir Babanov, who was to emerge as one of the champions of a more critical line, claimed that the twin tasks of the paper were to observe socialist legality and to protect the rights of youth. He read out a letter about a worker who had been injured in an accident but, because of bureaucratic indifference, had been unable to obtain the benefits to which he was entitled. Babanov urged the paper to investigate and to "stand up for young people, to fight for the preservation of their rights".[45]

T. Iakovlev's 'The Case of the Urn', published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* on March 21, provides an example of the sort of article for which journalists were clamouring.[46] The article told the story of a student in Burnar in Chuvashiia, who was sentenced to two years in jail for extinguishing a cigarette

---

[43] *Izvestiia* Closed Party Meeting, 29-30/3/56, TsAOPIM, f.453, op.2, d.27, l.15.
[44] Stanislav Sergeev, 'Do i posle slavy' in *Polveka na Mokhovoi (1947-1997)* (Moscow: MGU, 1997), p.106.
[45] 19/3/56, d.170, ll.64-68.
[46] T. Iakovlev, 'Delo ob okurke' KP 21/3/56, 2.

in a mug. The article was an indictment, not just of the arbitrariness of the head of the school who reported the matter to the police, but also the entire system of justice, which circumvented due legal process in order to secure a verdict. The paper condemned the legal process as "judicial wilfulness" and called the evidence a "doctoring of the facts", and criticised the judicial apparatus for failing to see "behind the protocols and conclusions [in the court report] a living, suffering boy". When the judge, confronted by the paper, suggested that "in any line of work there are always defects", the paper replied: "Where we are concerned with the fate of a person, such reasoning cannot be taken into account. Lawlessness can never be justified".

The article was, claimed Akhiiar Kireev, the paper's correspondent for Bashkiriia, a "defence of the Soviet person", and he urged more attention to be paid to canvassing judicial organs in order to ensure that "there are fewer people who still breach the rights of the Soviet individual".[47] The newspaper was therefore to be used to right social wrongs, and to influence the decisions of judicial and other organs. That this line emerged after the Secret Speech is no coincidence: it provided journalists with a means of atoning for the sins of the past by becoming public servants. The press exercised considerable influence over the judiciary. It was heavily involved with writing to political authorities to secure the reversal of judicial decisions ranging from a case of bribery, to an allegation of rape, to police corruption.[48]

The weight of the paper's authority often surprised the journalists themselves. In 1958, Babanov told the story of a visitor to the paper's reception who accused a man of beating his own mother, driving her out of the house and contributing to her death; the visitor also alleged that the man had a suspiciously large amount of savings. The complaint was passed on to the procurator; the man was arrested, spending six months in prison before his case went to court. However, it emerged that the complaint was unfounded: more than a dozen witnesses testified on behalf of the defendant, while the

[47] 26/3/56, d.170, l.14.
[48] Adzhubei to Kudriavtsev, 6/6/57, RGASPI f.98M, op.1, d.199, ll.21-26; Adzhubei to Otdel upraveleniia delami, 26/9/57, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.199, ll.48-54; Adzhubei to Otdel upraveleniia delami, before 23/5/59, RGASPI f.98M, op.1, d. 258, ll.13-16.

prosecution could only muster one, unconvincing, witness. But despite all evidence to the contrary, the defendant still received six months in jail – and it was the power of the press that had put him there. Upon learning of the presence of a journalist from *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* the court session was adjourned so that he could be brought up to speed with the case. Worse still, Babanov suggested that the authority of KP was such that the procurator automatically believed in the guilt of the accused.

> The fact is that, having received a letter from as authoritative a paper as *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, some unwise procurators or judges overdo it [перестараются], and convict a person for nothing. In this case, I'm sure that the boy is not guilty of anything…. And the judge gave him a year in prison just because he'd been in custody for six months, and for that the procurator who acted so thoughtlessly would have had to take responsibility.

Luckily, the paper's authority worked both ways: it was able to make sure that the Moscow city court reassessed the case, with Babanov expressing his certainty that the verdict would soon be overturned.[49]

Another example of the tangled relationship between newspaper and courts is provided by a well-known article published in 1956. A follow up to a 1953 article entitled "Mould", Allan Starodub and Il'ia Shatunovskii's "Once More on Mould" told the story of a group of young girls, from high-ranking families, who had robbed a family to fuel their easy-living lifestyle.[50]

Born in 1923 in Turkmenistan, Shatunovskii, was the latest in a long line of prominent satirists at the paper which included Semen Narin'iani and Boris Protopopov. A trained pilot and *frontovik*, he graduated from the History Faculty of MGU in 1950, working his way up from trainee to Responsible Secretary and becoming one of the paper's most prominent writers until his departure for *Pravda* in 1963.[51] Shatunovskii was in many ways a contradictory figure. At one time the Secretary of the Party Organisation, he was heavily involved in enforcing ideological orthodoxy within the *redaktsiia*. He had a habit of changing his views at the drop of a hat if it served the Party's current

[49] 28/4/58, d.225, ll.70-77.
[50] A. Starodub, I. Shatunovskii, 'Eshche raz o pleseni' KP 15/8/56, 2.
[51] Il'ia Shatunovskii, 'Tretii' in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003), p.577.

line. For all that, he was clearly a capable writer – and one with an eye for the sensational, as the cases of "Mould" and "Once More on Mould" show.

"Once More on Mould" was one of a number of articles which appeared in the press railing against youth who preferred a life of entertainment and leisure to honest toil. Such articles connected a number of disparate phenomena amongst Soviet youth: youth culture, youth crime, and changing social norms. Young people were growing up in an increasingly mediatised world, where foreign cultural products were increasingly available. In a climate of cultural Cold War, leisure choices became a political issue.[52] To choose Western cultural products, and to consume them in an altogether "uncultured" fashion was interpreted as a rejection of Western norms, and those who did so were seen as lying outside a Soviet community which relied on assertions of unity, rather than difference, and tarred with the brush of "*stiliachestvo*".[53] The fact that the criminals in "Once More …" were female challenged traditional gender stereotypes, tapping into fears that the natural order was being subverted.

The article's preoccupation with the lifestyles of the so-called "golden youth" centred in Moscow and Leningrad spoke of disquiet over the privileges of the ministerial elite and the growing distance between this elite and the rest of the public. Journalists saw the article not just as an intervention in the debate over cultural interests, but also as an attack on parenting and privilege amongst the Party hierarchy. The glue that held these fears together was the widespread rise in youth criminality and heroic discourses surrounding it, which the political elite found extremely difficult to combat.[54] The article, written in Shatunovskii's characteristically hectoring tone, was a clear attempt to rouse public opinion in outrage against these phenomena.

"Once More …" illustrates the complex relationship between press, public opinion, and authorities, as well as shedding light on journalists' understanding of their social role. For while the article had a wide resonance with the public,

---

[52] On this see Gleb Tsipursky, 'Pleasure, Power, and the Pursuit of Communism: Soviet Youth and State-Sponsored Popular Culture During the Early Cold War, 1945-1968'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011.

[53] Kristin Joy Roth-Ey, 'Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Princeton University, 2003.

[54] Dobson, pp.122-128; Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, pp.136-162.

receiving 500 letters in reply (with many urging the paper to deal with the issues raised by the article more forcefully), there was a feeling that the article was excessive.[55] Kireev saw in the article "a hint of a certain sensationalism", and added that, in the search for this sensationalism, the paper was "not thinking through the seriousness of the tendency we are writing about": the tendency towards hooliganism amongst working youth in cities.[56] Figures within the Komsomol, too, were discomfited by the article, in particular its iconoclasm in going after a minister. Boris Pankin told colleagues: "A ridiculous situation began. Twice I was with Goriunov – he read material by telephone to Shelepin, and it turned out as if it was some counterrevolutionary article …" Goriunov had decided to go after the parents of one of the accused parties, including a Minister, but this was struck out on the orders of Shelepin, causing readers to call in to ask "Why didn't you take things to the end?" [Почему не сказали до конца?] Pankin commented tartly that "Shelepin and the Central Committee of the Komsomol frequently impede us in our bravery" [мешают нас в нашей смелости].[57]

As a result, the follow-up article to "Once More On Mould" was considerably tamer than it might have been. Nevertheless, the paper criticised the fact that the prosecution only focused on those who committed the crime, rather than those who enjoyed the fruits of the theft and concluded: "The Soviet courts are strict but just and objective [нелицеприятен]. It makes no differentiation between individuals: all are equal before the law. That is why our public opinion [общественность] has reacted so strongly to the decisions of any judicial organ that provokes idle talk".[58] This appeal to public opinion over and above the authority of the judiciary, and the suggestion of double standards, illustrates the fact that journalists possessed their own vision of justice, and used the press as a means for transmitting it – even if it clashed with

[55] 'Spravka o pis'makh, otklikakh, kriticheskikh zamechaniakh i predlozheniakh, poluchennykh redaktsiei *Komsomol'skoi pravdy* ot chitatelei v avguste 1956 goda', 14/9/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, l.40.
[56] 3/9/56, d.176, ll.13-14. See also Nina Aleksandrova's comments on the article: 27/8/56, d.175, l.133.
[57] 5/11/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, ll.56-57.
[58] 'Po sledam vystuplenii *Komsomol'skoi pravdy*: Eshche raz o pleseni' KP 26/10/56, 2.

Party authorities. The fact that taking things to their logical conclusion was described as "boldness" illustrates the degree to which risking censure from the regime to ensure results was seen as an essential trait of the true journalist. As Sokolov said of the article: "If we have enough boldness to say 'a', then we need to say 'b'. If we have enough boldness to print an article, then let us have the boldness to ask Comrade Bulganin about the relationship of the Council of Ministers to the Minister. If we don't have that boldness, then we shouldn't print the article in order not to inflame passions".[59]

The mixed reaction towards Shatunovskii and Starodub's article was indicative of a growing tension between critique and consolidation, with some believing that journalists needed to take their articles "to the end", but others believing that this risked disorder. This fear was connected to a series of worrying trends within Soviet society, which began in March with unexpectedly hostile attitudes to the Secret Speech, included ferment within the student body, continued problems with hooliganism, and an increasingly volatile situation in Poland and Hungary.

Sokolov continued his comments on Shatunovskii and Starodub's article by talking about the uprising in Hungary. One of its leaders, he claimed, was a young man aged around 23-25 under the influence of "Horthy and his henchmen". In a somewhat far-fetched argument, he argued that the paper was partly to blame for events there, because the *Komsomol'skaia pravda* set the standard for the press in the people's democracies, and had failed to speak out critically against such individuals. The paper, he said, had only commented on the positive sides of life in Hungary, but entirely passed over the negative.[60] He then moved on to talking about "unhealthy moods" amongst Soviet youth in universities and the tasks of the press in overcoming this:

> Our newspaper today needs to be distinguished, not only by the strength of its criticism of ministers and their deputies … but also be distinguished by its ability to fight for the mood and the mind of youth in a well-qualified, sharp, and thorough manner, to unite them around the Central Committee of the Party, around the Central Committee of the Komsomol, to fight for a real unity, not just for show, to fight against indifference, and manifestations of apolitical moods

[59] 5/11/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, l.70.
[60] Ibid., ll.70-71.

> amongst youth, and to fight not just with scanty *zametki*, but war-like articles [*applause, noise, commotion in the room*].[61]

But it was just as easy to make the opposite argument: that too many "war-like articles" sowed the seeds of disquiet amongst the public. Journalists at lowly wall newspapers were now seeking to emulate their Moscow peers, and began to criticise their superiors unjustifiably, and this proved worrying to the authorities.[62] The regime began to place increased pressure on journalists to emphasise the stabilising functions of the press, rather than promoting change.

Hungary was the pivotal moment in this process. It dictated the direction that the Soviet Union would take in the years to come, and curbed many liberalising instincts within the political leadership. It was a huge embarrassment to the country's international image, and the regime would expend much energy in following years attempting to rebuild its reputation. As we will see in Chapter 2, the press was slow to react to the tensions, hamstrung by its own uncertainty as to the political significance of the events. But events in Hungary brought to the fore a tension within the post-Congress press: namely, the question of what the right balance was between the press's watchdog function and its propaganda function.

In such an international atmosphere, critical articles of any stripe were eagerly seized upon by the Western press. At the first post-Hungary *letuchka*, Vasilii Khomus'kov told colleagues of an unfortunate incident at a press conference at the end of October, involving the Chairman of the All-Union Committee of Physical Culture, a certain Comrade Romanov. The Soviet leadership had put out feelers about hosting the 1964 Olympics in Moscow, and an American correspondent asked him about the possibility. Romanov replied that the Soviet Union had capacity to do so, and a range of high-quality sporting facilities. However, an article had recently appeared in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, entitled 'At the Luzhniki Everything Should be Excellent' about poor drainage at the newly-built Luzhniki stadium in Moscow, which had almost caused the

---

[61] Ibid., ll.71-72.
[62] RGANI, f.5, op.34, d.4, ll.41-47.

postponement of a football match, turned the running track to sludge in wet weather, and seriously endangered the safety of spectators.[63]

Asked about the article, Romanov tied himself in knots, first asserting that everything was fine, and then, when asked whether the paper had printed something untrue, meekly replying that *Komsomol'skaia pravda* merely wanted everything to be perfect, and, resurrecting a Stalinist slogan, claiming that this was merely a conflict between the good and the excellent.[64] After the conference, Romanov spoke to Khomus'kov and his colleagues for forty minutes, asking: "Why did you publish the article? I wish you'd have come to me and talked about it. We know that there are a lot of faults at the Luzhniki". After that, Romanov complained to Adzhubei with many unflattering remarks, and asking why the paper had "fouled its own nest" [вынесли сор из избы] by publishing the article.[65]

Khomus'kov drew his own conclusions from the affair, pointing out that this was not an isolated incident, and that many other bureaucrats, both in high and low positions dealt with criticism in the same way. They were concerned "not with the essence of the question, not by a desire to make everything as good as it can be, but for a quiet life". He pointed out that the Committee still hadn't replied to the paper, suggesting that it needed to "sharply and seriously speak out with material, and ensure decisive measures from those people that we criticise".[66]

However, in the conditions of a diplomatic Cold War, where every problem was to be seized upon by the other side, critical articles could appear to give the enemy a vital advantage, to be "fouling one's own nest". The incident thus revealed the inferiority complex at the heart of Soviet superiority, and showed how criticism could also be interpreted, not as eliminating shortcomings, but as airing dirty washing in public. From here, it was a short step to the idea that any criticism was potentially subversive, and should therefore be voiced in private. Articles on the problems of Soviet youth were

[63] I. Mel'nikov, E. Cheronov, 'V Luzhnikakh vse dolzno byt' prekrasno' KP 23/10/56, 4.
[64] 5/11/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, ll.67-68.
[65] Ibid., l.68.
[66] Ibid.

appearing with greater frequency in the Western press, and collections of articles were pored over by Agit-Prop officials.[67] In a climate of heightened tensions about the role of the mass media in stirring up tensions in Hungary and Poland, the capacity for negative materials to do likewise in the Soviet Union was acutely felt, and at the beginning of 1957, a Komsomol report on KP suggested that negative articles were giving rise to troublesome stories in the foreign media.[68]

Some at the paper were disquieted by the implications of the paper's current, critical line. In November of that year, Komolov spotted amongst his colleagues a certain "leftist" tendency towards "demagoguery". He condemned the article 'Once More on Mould' as an example of a worrying trend at the paper: the "inner fire" of the journalist to take aim at bureaucrats and ministers, and the desire to take everything "to the end", so that, ultimately, journalists' articles ended up in the drawer rather than the newspaper.[69] Thus, in attempting to force through the goals of the Twentieth Party Congress, colleagues had gone too far in their "critical line", to the detriment of the effectiveness of the criticism, and with the associated danger of encouraging hostile voices:

> … this line and comrades' desire [to criticise] I subjectively fully support, because it reflects, albeit in a distorted form, people's logical – and to a large extent progressive – desire to begin to speak sharply and to begin to act sharply. This line is, in its spirit, absolutely correct, but, in actual fact, it is pseudo-revolutionary, because it is superficial, and satisfies only vulgar and philistine critics and not genuine critics of all our shortcomings.[70]

Komolov continued that the paper's real task would be to ensure that it spoke up for the public "having marked off from them all those who are demagogues". If the paper did otherwise, Komolov claimed, "these demagogues would become heroes of the leftist crowd and then we would do real damage to our cause".[71]

---

[67] On the Western press's interest in the Soviet youth problem, see Roth-Ey, 'Mass Media', Ch.1. On Soviet interest in what Westerners were saying about Soviet youth, see RGANI, f.5, op.33, d.31, ll.82-94. On Soviet reaction to the appearance of Soviet press articles in the West, see RGANI, f.5, op.55, d.57.

[68] 'O kriticheskikh vystupleniiakh gazety *Komsomol'skoi pravdy*', 1957, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.847, ll.133-134, 137-138.

[69] 19/11/56, d.177, l.46.

[70] Ibid., ll.46-47.

[71] Ibid., ll.49-50.

Condemnation of the paper's critical line dovetailed with concerns about demagogic moods within the student population, on which journalists frequently commented in *letuchki*.[72] Former KP journalist Vladimir Dudintsev's story 'Not By Bread Alone', serialised in *Novyi mir* between August and October, played an important part in this process. A novella about interference and fear of innovation amongst the industrial elite, Dudintsev's story provided a fictional means for the discussion of many of the social ills that journalists at KP were seeking to expose, and led to public attacks on the state bureaucracy in discussions.[73] By the end of the year, a perfect storm was brewing, encompassing continued concerns about hooliganism and crime amongst youth, international tensions, and fears about intellectual dissent. In December, two important letters were released: on the use of social forces in overcoming delinquency on unhealthy moods amongst students.[74] The latter of these contained reference to events in Hungary, intellectuals' responses to Dudintsev's novella, foreign radio broadcasts, and articles in the press which showed Soviet reality "in an incorrect light".[75] Journalists now began to talk of the necessity of combatting demagoguery within the student body. Shatunovskii, who had by now been thoroughly slated for 'Once More on Mould', now trod a more conciliatory line at a Party Organisation meeting in December, which was convened to discuss the letter:

> With a series of poorly-qualified critical articles, we have created a clamorous atmosphere [крикливую обстановку] and given nourishment to demagogues and enemies. I'm not in favour of cutting down on criticism. We cannot move away from the tradition of a brave, sharp-toothed newspaper. But if we speak against an unfit director, then we need to make it so that he is removed. One founded, efficient article is better than a constant screeching tone.[76]

---

[72] E.g. 21/5/56, d.172, ll.62-64. See also *Sovetskaia pechat'* Party meeting, 29/12/56, TsAOPIM, f.1799, op.1, d.1, l.27.

[73] See Denis Kozlov, 'Naming the Social Evil: the Readers of *Novyi mir* and Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*, 1956-59 and Beyond' in *Dilemmas*, pp.80-98; Vol'fram Eggeling, *Politika i kul'tura pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve*, 1953-1970 gg. (Moscow: Airo-XX, 1999), pp.74-76.

[74] 'Ob usilenii politicheskoi raboty partiinykh organizatsii v massakh i presechenii vylazok antisovetskikh vrazdebnykh elementov', 19/12/56, in *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo. Fevral' 1956 – nachalo 80-x godov. Tom 2* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia', 2003), p.210; Juliane Fürst, 'The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy Between Stalin and Khrushchev' in *Dilemmas*, p.148.

[75] 'Ob usilenii', pp.211-212.

[76] Party Meeting, 25/12/56, d.30, l.170.

Il'ia Kotenko, a distinguished figure at the paper, considered the problem, not as a clash between two viewpoints, but as a case of "demagogues", who preyed upon "ordinary, run-of-the-mill students, in the main newcomers". He argued that the paper needed to print more on the positive hero as a means for educating young people (see Chapter 3), and argued that the paper needed to take a tougher line on *Novyi mir* for breaching the tenets of Socialist Realism.[77]

By this time, the relationship between the paper and the authorities had deteriorated significantly, following the publication at the beginning of the month of a critical article on the suppression of criticism in Kaluga *oblast'*, near Moscow. The article's author was Boris Pankin, a young MGU graduate in the Department of Komsomol Life. Pankin was considered to be an adept journalist, and climbed the ladder at the paper from special correspondent to Head of Department to Deputy Editor to Editor-in-Chief in only thirteen years.

It was his front-page article on this affair, 'How the 'Torch' was Extinguished', that put him on the journalistic map.[78] Pankin's article told the story of the Kaluga Torch: a youth initiative club organised by the editors of the local newspaper which challenged problems with leisure provision in the area by arranging a "discussion club", excursions, photography lessons, winter sports, and creating a "flying brigade", a rerun of an pre-war Komsomol initiative.[79] It differed from type by being a club run by young people, for young people – something to which the paper had previously given its support.[80] However, under pressure from the Party *gorkom*, the Komsomol's *obkom* stepped in to close the club down.[81] Secretary Viktor Kruglov accused the founders of the club of "show[ing] too much initiative" by failing to consult the *gorkom* in advance.[82]

---

[77] Ibid., ll.168-169.
[78] B. Pankin, 'Kak pogasili 'Fakel'' KP 9/12/56, 1-2.
[79] Pankin, 'Fakel'; Dmitrii Bykov, *Bulat Okudzhava* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2009), p.252.
[80] Gleb Tsipursky, 'Having Fun in the Thaw: Youth Initiative Clubs in the Post-Stalin Years' *Carl Beck Papers* 2201 (2012), 17.
[81] In order to avoid complicated circumlocutions, when I refer to '*obkom*' and '*gorkom*' I have in mind the Komsomol versions, unless the Party version is explicitly referred to.
[82] On the conflicts surrounding the Kaluga Torch see Tsipursky, "Having Fun", 32-34.

At the heart of the article was a conflict between the volunteer-initiators of the club, variously described as "lively", "cheerful" [жизнерадостные], and "smiling affably", and grey bureaucrats who were more interested in the minutiae of Komsomol rules than in supporting a much-needed initiative. In doing so, they extinguished the initiative of young people. As Pankin concluded: "The overcautious do not love but fear the new. But without searches for the new, there can be no interesting Komsomol life."

The article met with a positive response at the paper. Natella Lordkipanidze cited Pankin an example for other journalists to follow – someone who was not afraid to take things to their conclusion:

> It happens that a person goes to a place, sees some shortcomings, everything is clear, but when they sit down to write it, they don't use their power to generalise things, their ability to think and analyse … Either authors are afraid, or they talk so that there is less generalisation, or they don't have enough talent. That's what happened with these articles. Only Boris Pankin decided to criticise even the Secretary of the *raikom* of the Party and to reveal what was going on, to dot the 'i'. There's not any sharpness, or depth in many critical materials.[83]

Here, we see how Pankin's ability to criticise "even the Secretary of the *raikom* of the Party" without fear of the consequences was cause for praise (it was not established practice for a Komsomol newspaper to attack Party organs). Moreover, Lordkipanidze's words on 'generalising' hinted at a challenge to the informal rule of criticism: "Generalise, but don't criticise!" – in other words, she implied that criticism might turn into a wider social *critique*.[84]

Initially, it seemed that the newspaper's article had hit its target. The Kaluga *obkom* admitted its errors, promising support for the initiative.[85] But at around the same time, the Ministry of Culture wrote to the Komsomol to complain about the excessive autonomy of clubs like the Kaluga Torch, and criticised KP for defending it.[86] Slowly but surely, the tables were turned, leading to the moment in January 1957 when Goriunov reported back to his

[83] 17/12/56, d.177, ll.204-205.
[84] Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, (New York: Quadrangle), p.370.
[85] Sazonova to Shelepin, 9/3/57, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.846, ll.142-144.
[86] Tsipursky, 'Having Fun', 33.

colleagues about his appearance at the Bureau of the Komsomol Central Committee on Ideological Questions.[87]

Those present at the meeting raised dozens of critical issues about the paper's work: among others, its work with youth correspondents, its distance from the Central Committee of the Komsomol and lack of material on Komsomol business, its lack of counter-propaganda and ideological material, a lack of coverage of material on the heroic past of the nation, the poverty of its local correspondent network, its poor leadership on questions in the arts and literature.[88] But the most weighty criticism of the paper was the fact that the paper had written about negative aspects of Soviet life "more vividly than the positive" and, connected with this, that it had failed to print sufficient material on positive heroes.[89] Pankin, meanwhile, was hauled over the coals for his earlier criticisms of Shelepin.[90] Even from the transcript, it is clear that the attacks had shocked Goriunov:

> I repeat that the discussion was quite sharp and I recognise that, when I left the Central Committee, for a few minutes afterwards I could not inwardly accept all the criticism that was levelled at the paper. But when I calmed down and once again considered everything from the position of the interests of the paper, I have to recognise that the criticism of the Central Committee Bureau was, in general, wholly correct. We need to put it bluntly: in general, the paper was sharply criticised, and rarely praised. Both in the collective and in the editorial board, and on the part of the Editor in Chief elements of conceit have appeared".[91]

Goriunov's words were hardly a wholehearted acceptance of the Komsomol's attack, but he did recognise that the paper could not do anything but accept them.

The paper's position soon unravelled. At the Seventh Komsomol Plenum at the end of February, Sazonova, the *obkom*'s First Secretary, attacked the paper for articles such as "Once More on Mould", doubting whether the paper's "sensations" had delivered real results: "they took a big swing [замах

---

[87] 28/1/57, d.189, l.122.
[88] Ibid., ll.122-128.
[89] Ibid., l.122, 124. See 'O kriticheskikh vystupleniiakh' on this point.
[90] Boris Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha. V litsakh i maskakh, sobytiiakh i kazusakh* (Moscow: Voskresen'e, 2002), p.74.
[91] Ibid., l.129.

получился большой], but without result".[92] She conceded that the article was partially true, but nevertheless argued that it had "vulgarised" the paper's name. She cited the strained international context as justification for her attack: "Who is this criticism from *Komsomol'skaia pravda* educating? It's no accident that responses to this article have appeared in the bourgeois press about how 'in the Soviet Union they are flouting the rights of youth'."[93]

On March 5, 1957, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* printed a follow-up to the article, relating the happy news that the club was now up and running, and that the *obkom* of the Komsomol had recognised its mistakes.[94] However, the last sentence of the short article read: "Having noted that *Komsomol'skaia pravda's* article "How 'The Torch' was Extinguished" was both timely and correct, at the same time, the bureau of the *obkom* considers that a number of positions stated in the article are inaccurate". Sazonova now fired off a further complaint to Shelepin, the Head of the Komsomol, complaining that Pankin had distorted Kruglov's words as well as the words of the *obkom*, that he had failed to interview members of the *obkom* and *gorkom*, and been inaccurate about Sazonova's style of working. She argued that the paper had been too slow to print a follow-up to Pankin's original article and accused Goriunov of "protecting his own back" [оберегает честь мундира].[95]

Had the article been published earlier in the year, when the rules were less clear cut, it is likely that Pankin's assault would have succeeded. But now that the political elite was worried about the centrifugal forces threatening the stability of the nation, Pankin's article was considered to be a gross error. The press was now expected to serve as an agent of stabilisation, rather than revolutionary iconoclasm. As Goriunov was told at the Komsomol: "The *redaktsiia* doesn't always take into account the situation when publishing critical materials, including our article on Kaluga "How 'The Torch' Was Extinguished". Comrades said that with this article we were adding fuel to the

---

[92] 'Stenogramma VII-go plenuma TsK VLKSM ob uluchshenii ideino-voispitatel'noi raboty Komsomol'skikh organizatsii sredi Komsomol'tsev i molodezhi', 26-27/2/57, RGASPI, f.1M, op.2, d.356, l.198.
[93] Ibid., l.199.
[94] 'Po sledam vystuplenii *Komsomol'skoi pravdy*: Kak pogasili 'Fakel'', 5/3/57, 2.
[95] Sazonova to Shelepin, 9/3/57, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.846, ll.142-144.

fire [подлили масло], at a time when demagogues are speaking out in many educational establishments. We need to think about this."[96] The events of 1956 had thus shown that there were limits even to Party-minded criticism, but also illustrated the difficulties of discerning where they lay. In this case, the criticism of KP was partly caused by external events, and partly by the Komsomol's annoyance at the general tenor of the paper's line over the course of the year, which, in its opinion, was giving rise to unhealthy tendencies.

In many ways, the rules of journalistic criticism were laid down in late 1956: a critical article would be written; officials would accept its conclusions, before arguing that "certain" conclusions were inaccurate, or overstated. Enlisting the support of the local Party organs, the criticised would focus on these problems to discredit the article and the journalists who wrote it. Almost exactly three years after Pankin's article on the Kaluga Flame, an article published in December 1959 alleged that Komsomol officials had stifled the initiative of another youth brigade, this time in Gor'kii.[97] Once again, the Gor'kii *obkom* of the Komsomol initially recognised the criticism, before two weeks later writing to Voronov and Sergei Pavlov, the Head of the Komsomol, to complain about unjust criticisms of certain 'comrades', and inaccuracies.[98] Though the article's authors attempted to justify their position, the complaints were upheld, and one of the authors was disciplined. Similar processes took place at other newspapers.[99]

Not all critical articles met with the same reaction, of course. The majority of criticism targeted more lowly officials, and was simply accepted and acted upon.[100] Criticism might be requested by the regime, in order to discredit local officials, or highlight shortcomings in the work of a certain enterprise.[101] It could also be the case that an investigation would eventually find in the paper's favour, as was the case with two articles published in 1960 and 1961, "Where

[96] 28/1/57, d.189, l.127.
[97] V. Il'in, A. Skrypnik, 'Ugasaiushchie ogon'ki' KP 13/12/59, 3.
[98] RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.1002, ll.79-87.
[99] E.g. RGANI, f.96, op.1, d.22, ll.118-153; RGANI, f.5, op.33, d.202, ll.47-117.
[100] E.g. Selivanov to KP, 22/6/57, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.201, ll.42-43.
[101] Olessia Koltsova, *News Media and Power in Russia* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.26.

are They Tired?" and "The Eparchy in Retirement". But even those articles required numerous reports and investigations to verify the paper's findings – and one suspects that its ultimate success was because the ministry making the complaint, the Central Committee of Soviet Trades Unions, did not enjoy much political clout.[102] Successful or not, journalists could have been forgiven for wanting an easier life.

The unsurprising consequence of the paper's catastrophic end to 1956 was increased caution on the part of editors. After Goriunov's departure from the paper in May 1957, Aleksei Adzhubei took over the reins.[103] Under his leadership, criticism was not extinguished entirely, but it became less prominent. This may seem surprising, given Adzhubei's reputation as the saviour of Soviet journalism.[104] However, Adzhubei's talent was less for creating a campaigning journalism, and more for creating new forms of mass agitational journalism. During his years as editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* between 1957 and 1959 he pursued a 'romantic', rather than an analytical vision of Soviet reality. As Chapter 3 shows, his tenure witnessed a prodigious increase in the sort of positive materials that the regime was demanding: rousing stories of industrial progress accompanied by a parade of heroes.[105]

It was only under Adzhubei's successor, Iurii Voronov, who took over in September 1959, that the paper began to print criticism in greater quantities. At the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961, Aleksandr Tvardovskii called on journalists and writers to publicise the difficulties of everyday life, for to do otherwise would be to cause irreparable damage to their relationship with

---

[102] RGANI, f.5, op.33, d.173, ll.46-56, 135-150.

[103] It is unclear whether Goriunov's departure was linked to the events of December 1956. Pankin suggests that Goriunov came under heavy attack from the Komsomol, but survived the onslaught. He also notes that Goriunov was happy to approve an honorarium for best article of the month for Pankin. See Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha*, p.75. Whatever the case may be, Goriunov soon found himself in a more prestigious position: Director of the Soviet news agency TASS (see Chapter 2).

[104] Tat'iana Volkova, 'A.I. Adzhubei – redaktor i publitsist' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, MGU, 2010; Wolfe, *Governing*; Ninel' Izmailova, 'Adzhubei: talant — eto pozitsiia' *Chitaiushchaia Rossiia* 1/1 (1994): 13-15; *Aleksei Adzhubei v koridorakh chetvertoi vlasti*, ed. by Dmitrii Mamleev (Moscow: Izvestiia, 2003); Sergeev, 'Do i posle'.

[105] Volkova, p.65.

readers.[106] A year later, a far-reaching Central Committee resolution called for criticism to become more effective. It censured newspapers for failing to follow up their critical articles and called on journalists to engage in "brave and demanding" criticism, "without regard for position". However, the resolution also warned that what was required was not "cavilling, not provocation [уколы], and not intellectual digs [шпильки]", adding that, while the printing of criticism was permitted, to do so with "philistine relish, aiming at a sensation" was not.[107]

However, journalists' discussions were less far-reaching than in 1956, most likely because they better understood the ideological limits. Nevertheless, there were still journalists who were willing to take risks. In October 1963, an article by Donetsk correspondent Kim Kostenko, entitled "Will there be a city of Bratsk?", compared the heroic myth of Bratsk GES with the rather more worrying reality.[108] But, once again, that article met with a negative reaction from the Komsomol, showing once again how uncomfortable a fit criticism and self-criticism were within the context of a Soviet state that perceived itself as being under constant threat from within and without.[109]

Within the profession, however, criticism was still seen as an essential task of the true journalist. In 1962, an article in *Sovetskaia pechat'* told of the author's quest to uncover misdeeds in Chechnya, despite political interference. For him, taking criticism to its conclusion was absolutely necessary: "We didn't stand aside. We didn't have the right to," he wrote.[110] Criticism was absolutely vital for retaining readers' trust: "The people of our *raion* looked to the newspaper: they hadn't lost their belief in the power of the Soviet press. And it depended on us, workers of the paper, to justify that belief."[111] Having the bravery to bear the blows of the local authorities was a matter of honour:

---

[106] *Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Charlotte Saikowski and Leo Gruliow (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1962), p.188.
[107] 'O povyshenii deistvennosti vystuplenii Sovetskoi pechati', 18/9/62 in *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika. Vyp. 4* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1963), p.452.
[108] A. Glazov, K. Kostenko, 'Byt' li gorodu Bratsku' KP 16/10/63, 2.
[109] Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha*, pp.86-91.
[110] Magomet Khunkaev, 'Sovest' i muzhestvo korrespondenta', SP 12 (1962), 25.
[111] Ibid.

> What does the honour of the Soviet journalist mean? It means that you, if you call yourself a journalist, must be a fighter for our glorious Party, a pure person, principled, upright, and persistent. To bear the name 'Soviet journalist' is a high honour, and we need to value this honour. Otherwise you are not a journalist, otherwise you have no place in the Soviet press.[112]

As anthropologist Natalia Roudakova has shown, this moral aspect of journalism was fundamental. Criticism provided a way for journalists to justify their role in society – particularly when a large part of their role was still to fulfil tasks from above. For Roudakova, notions of journalistic responsibility cut across the boundaries of personal and professional, "forcing the journalist to answer not only to the authorities and to the readers and viewers, but to the journalist's private conscience as well".[113] And, as the relationship between journalists and regime threatened to unravel in the late 1960s, staying true to one's conscience became ever more important.

3 "Criticise, but Don't Make A Fuss!" Criticism under Brezhnev

Iurii Voronov edited *Komsomol'skaia pravda* between 1959 and 1965, having arrived at the paper in 1955 from the second most important youth publication in the country, Leningrad's *Smena*. Born in 1929 in Leningrad, Voronov saw his brother and younger sister killed during the war when shrapnel fell on their house. He was awarded a medal "For the Defence of Leningrad" when he was only 14, and for the rest of his life he wrote poetry about his wartime experiences.[114] Voronov rarely wrote as a journalist, which for many years made some figures at the paper wary of him, considering him unworthy of the role.[115] However, Voronov was a more collegial presence at the paper than the more authoritarian Adzhubei, and gradually won over his colleagues, becoming a popular figure on the sixth floor. His continued presence at the paper after

---

[112] Ibid., 26.
[113] Natalia Roudakova, 'From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of Their Public after Socialism' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stanford, CA, 2009, p.125.
[114] O.N. Shetinskii, 'Iurii Petrovich Voronov. Vospominanie o druge' in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma-press, 2003), pp.350-351.
[115] Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* p.98.

Khrushchev's ouster is perhaps surprising, given that the editors of both *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were immediately fired for their ties to Khrushchev. Voronov was the only member of Adzhubei's informal "Press Group" to survive the purge of October 1964.[116]

According to Pankin, the paper's First Deputy Editor, Khrushchev's ouster energised Voronov, who took at face value the regime's claims to be fighting against bureaucratism and voluntarism.[117] This was part of a new ideological climate in the Soviet Union, brought about by Brezhnev and Kosygin's technocratic leadership. Debates within the Union of Journalists became more substantive and, under the editorship of Egor Iakovlev, *Sovetskaia pechat'* (later *Zhurnalist*), which had previously attracted little interest amongst readers, began to print more hard-hitting, far-reaching materials on the world of journalism.[118] These articles cited the need for a journalistic code of honour, and saw criticism above all as a service to readers.

An 1966 editorial cited the October 1964 plenum as a new dawn for Soviet journalists.[119] The article twice cited the hypothetical situation of a journalist asked to write a positive story about a factory who, instead of positive data, actually uncovers a scandal:

> What to do? By all statistical indicators the factory is a leading one. How can it be subjected to criticism? After … agonising wavering the article sees the light of day. Naturally, it isn't easy for the editors of the paper: there are unpleasant explanations at the *obkom*, at the *sovnnarkhoz*, and the author and editor have to fight off attacks from the leaders of the factory. But nothing can compare with the wonderful feeling of satisfaction that the journalists of that paper experiences in connection with the fact that they have not acted against their conscience before readers![120]

An article printed a year later was even more explicit about the need for the press to be more forthright in criticism: "It seems that to overpraise is better

---

[116] Ibid., p.100.
[117] Ibid.
[118] See Egor Iakovlev, 'Pressa ravna obshchestvennomu sostoianiiu', in *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty.*, ed. by A. I. Volkov, M. G. Pugacheva and S. F. Iarmoliuk (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), pp. 258-271.
[119] 'Otvetstvennost pered chitatelem' SP 7 (1966), 1-2. See also G. Zimanas, 'Sovetskii obraz zhizni' SP 12 (1966), 3-4.
[120] Ibid., 1.

than to go overboard with criticism. But [the newspaper] is not a collection of legends. One really cannot know today's readers to believe that they require rose-tinted optimism."[121]

However, by the time of the Second Congress of Journalists in 1966, it already seemed as though the political climate was changing. In February of that year, newspapers, including *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, were heavily involved in the orchestration of a show trial of writers Siniavskii and Daniel', whose apparently anti-Soviet works had been published abroad. By that time, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had also seen the limits of reform, with Voronov outlasting Adzhubei by scarcely twelve months, as the paper's iconoclasm caused ructions within the political elite. The firing of Voronov suggests that journalists' hope for a new, more professional attitude to criticism on the part of the Party elite was misplaced.

On July 21 1965, the paper published an article by one of the paper's most popular publicists, Arkadii Sakhnin. Entitled 'At Sea and After', it told the story of the captain of an Odessan whaling fleet, Solianik, under whose command many members of the fleet had died, while others committed suicide.[122] The article was discussed all over the Soviet Union, and, according to one account, cited as an example of the freedom of the Soviet press to a party of visiting British trade unionists.[123] Within the paper, too, the article was considered to be a radical step forward, a crystallisation of everything they had sought to achieve since the ouster of Khrushchev, giving rise to a "festival atmosphere" at the paper:

> **Goliakov:** [I]t so rarely happens that some problem touches on the essence of our life like the ones to which we are turning our attention today: bad management, indifference, bureaucratism, a lack of principle. And if we conquer all these enemies, we will triple our riches, multiply them by ten.
>
> Many, if not most, of these problems are difficult and complex. But there can be no question about the following: by resolving them our people will benefit, and the cause for which we fight, for which we live on this earth, will also benefit.

---

[121] Irina Dement'eva, 'Ot chernogo k rozovomu' *Zhurnalist* 2 (1967), 22.
[122] Arkadii Sakhnin, 'V reise i posle' KP 21/7/65, 2, 4.
[123] Ilya Gerol, Geoffrey Molyneux, *The Manipulators: Inside the Soviet Media* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1988), pp.89-90.

> There is not one obligation that is more important for us than the obligation to enable the resolution of these problems. In order to prevent this, sometimes people use all kinds of subterfuge [все уловки] that only human ingenuity is capable of…. Our duty in such cases should not give rise to any doubts: after all, we gave a vow to be true to Lenin's principles. And we must remain true to this vow. The main thing is that we have far more like-minded people than enemies [больше единомышленников, чем недругов], and that should give us new strength. The things that we write about with a heavy heart will become the object of concern for a large number of people. And that means that every one of us will become more interested in what is happening in our own surroundings, and be more intent on looking in our hearts and more decisive in uprooting the shoots of injustice.[124]

In Sergei Goliakov's words we see a continued belief in the purifying value of criticism, and a nod to the power of Soviet public opinion (see Chapter 4). Journalists at the paper listed the article as the best of the month, and, as late as September 1965, the paper's Party Organisation listed the article as a positive achievement.[125] But the paper had already stepped into the middle of a political battlefield, and found itself in the sights of prominent party figures, for Solianik was based in Ukraine, the power-base of Petr Shelest and Nikolai Podgornyi. An attack on Sakhnin was an attack on them and on the entire Ukrainian leadership, including Brezhnev.[126]

The case took a now-familiar course. While the (largely powerless) local Party committee upheld the findings of Sakhnin's article, Solianik and members of the *obkom* conspired to produce a refutation. Meeting after meeting was held; report after report was produced, some in favour of the article, some against. It was a testament to the democratic structures of the party, but also to its fundamental incoherence: criticism and self-criticism were designed to overcome bureaucracy, but instead produced more of it. According to Sakhnin's reminiscences, the article was discussed at the Bureau of the Zhovtnevyi Party *raikom*, the *obkom* in Odessa, the State Fisheries Committee, the Commission of Party Control, the Agit-Prop Section of the Party, and the Secretariat of the Central Committee.[127]

---

[124] 21/7/65, d.384, l. 25.
[125] 'Reshenie redaktsionnoi kollegii o luchshikh materialakh za iul' mesiats', after July 1965, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.390, l.1; 'Otchetnyi doklad rabote partbiuro', 29/9/65, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.40, ll.41-42.
[126] Viacheslav Ogryzko, 'Zhertva apparatnykh intrig' *Literaturnaia Rossiia* 15 (16 April 2010).
[127] Arkadii Saknin, 'No eto bylo tol'ko nachalo' *Izvestiia*, 23-24/9/88.

The Odessa *obkom* complained of a lack of objectivity, and charged that the article was "aimed at the lachrymose and sentimental tastes of a philistine". They admitted that Solianik deserved "severe criticism", but claimed that the article was "unnecessary and harmful", and that it "has led to the misinforming of public opinion both within the country and abroad".[128] However, an Agit-Prop committee, led by Aleksandr Iakovlev, came to the opposite conclusion, stating that the paper had been right to attack a "high-handed leader who has lost his feeling of Party responsibility and who, by his actions, has caused enormous harm to the question of indoctrinating the fleet". The report censured local party and economic bodies, as well as the fisheries Committee for not taking action, and noted Solianik's patronage of the Odessa *obkom* and figures within the Fisheries Committee.[129] As a result of this report, the case was sent to the Secretariat of the Central Committee for discussion in October of that year.

Archival records of the meeting are absent, but we do have a number of eyewitness accounts. They suggest that for the very first time since becoming General Secretary of the Party, Brezhnev was in attendance (this was unusual, as his level was the Politburo, not the Secretariat). Those present, including Podgornyi and Shelest, interpreted Brezhnev's presence as a sign of support for Solianik, and as a result, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was subjected to sharp attacks: "… the discussion came down to the fact that the article discredited a well-known figure in the party and state, and that it was not Solianik who was to blame, but those who printed the article and supported it".[130] It seemed that the paper was about to suffer defeat.

However, they had reckoned without Aleksandr Shelepin who, at the time, was still a Secretary in the Central Committee and a member of the Politburo. Shelepin had always been a powerful supporter of Voronov, after being impressed by a speech given by the latter at a meeting. He brought Voronov to the paper in 1954 from *Smena* and immediately gave him a position

---

[128] Leonid Mlechin, *Zheleznyi Shurik* (Moscow: Iauza, 2004), p.409.
[129] Sakhnin, 'No eto bylo'; A.N. Iakovlev, *Sumerki. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Materik, 2005), p.323.
[130] Iakovlev, p.324.

as Deputy Editor, much to the chagrin of many within the collective.[131] Despite Shelepin's departure from the Komsomol, he remained a powerful protector, and ensured that his charge would ascend to the Editor's chair after Adzhubei. Shelepin continued to support Voronov at the Secretariat, arguing that everybody had missed the point: either the facts in the article were either true or false. If they were false, then both the editor of the paper and those within the Agit-Prop committee should be punished. If they were true, then Solianik had questions to answer.[132] This changed the entire mood of the meeting. Suslov was forced into a compromise: Solianik would be fired from his post, but not excluded from the Party.[133] But Suslov ultimately supported the paper: "Of course, the paper could have asked for advice before publication, but, judging by the results of the inspection, everything was laid out correctly".[134]

It seemed that the paper had won a hard-fought victory. But Brezhnev, who had sat impassively through the meeting, was to have the last word.[135] Calling both Voronov and Iakovlev over, he barked at them: "Criticise all you like, but don't make a fuss!" [«Критиковать критикуйте, но не подсвистывайте!»].[136] The paper may have secured the removal of Solianik, but soon found itself under fire for "certain deviations from the truth and the distortion of certain facts".[137]

This time, Voronov's miscalculation had serious consequences. He was offered a promotion to the position of Deputy Editor of *Pravda* – the proverbial offer that could not be refused – but, having been accepted, the offer was amended to the lower position of Responsible Secretary. Voronov occupied this role until 1968, at which point he was summarily dispatched to the role of correspondent in Berlin, where he languished unhappily for fourteen years,

---

131 Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* pp.97-98.
132 Iakovlev, Mlechin and Pankin have accounts of Shelepin's address, slightly differently worded, but similar in content: Iakovlev, p.324; Mlechin, p.411; Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* p.107.
133 Iakovlev, p.325; Mlechin, pp.411-412; Ogryzko, 'Zhertva'.
134 Iakovlev, pp.324-325.
135 Sakhnin's account has a far more verbose Brezhnev, but, on the evidence of other accounts, he seems to have mixed Brezhnev up with Suslov. Iakovlev, Mlechin, and Ogryzko all have him staying silent.
136 Mlechin, p.412; Iakovlev, p.325; Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* p.107.
137 Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* pp.106-107.

refusing to learn German out of unhappy memories of the Blockade.[138] The reasons for such punishment are obscure, but some suspect that it was a way of punishing Voronov for his links to the man who was once one of Brezhnev's main rivals – especially as Voronov's demotion only took place once Shelepin had been removed from the leadership of the Commission of Party Control in December 1965.[139] Yet heavy-hitting criticism did not disappear after Voronov's departure in December 1965. New Editor-in-Chief Boris Pankin, who had been heavily involved in the decision to publish Sakhnin's muckraking exposé, proved to be no less enthusiastic about the campaigning role of the press. The centrepiece campaign of his seven-year tenure at the paper was his campaign for the protection of Lake Baikal.

The paper's concern for the Soviet natural environment was something that linked the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras. After the Twentieth Party Congress, journalists like Vasilii Peskov began to condemn the regime's "rapacious" attitude to the environment, while Adzhubei argued that Soviet agriculture, including the Virgin Lands campaign, threatened to lead to far worse yields down the line. The paper published a number of articles on the subject of Russia's woodlands, and in 1958 introduced a regular rubric on nature preservation. Under Voronov's leadership the paper began a campaign to support a number of students from Leningrad in their attempt to create a sustainable Cedar forest ["Kedrograd"] in the Altai Mountains, which would be more efficient and less environmentally destructive than the intensive methods hitherto favoured.[140] The campaign came up against the opposition of local bureaucrats, who resented the scheme's inability to fulfil the plan, and before long the most valuable resources of the *Kedrogradtsy* were handed over to local authorities, and the Kedrograd experiment moved to less fertile land. The articles were written by Vladimir Chivilikhin, a Russophile writer whose historical essay *Pamiat'* (1978-84) enjoyed wide popularity. By 1966, bureaucrats had derailed the project, and Chivilikhin spoke at the Fifteenth

[138] Shetinskii, 'Voronov', p.350.
[139] Ogryzko, 'Zhertva'.
[140] On Chivilikhin and the Kedrograd experiment see Douglas R. Weiner, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachëv* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), pp.312-339.

Komsomol Congress on the problem of "institutional narrowness and bureaucratism" and "the spinners of red tape". He argued presciently that "the scientific and economic problem is fused with a social one".[141] After Khrushchev's ouster, the paper's agenda was furthered by "Fatherland", an article by Peskov published during the final months of Voronov's editorship.[142]

Peskov was one of the paper's most prominent journalists of the 1960s and 1970s. Born in 1930 in a small village in the Black Earth region of Russia, he came to the paper from a small regional paper, *Molodoi kommunar* in 1956, and was soon praised for the quality of his writing and his photography. Seven short years after his arrival at the paper, Peskov was awarded a Lenin Prize for his collection of articles, "Stride Across the Dew" [Шаги по росе]. He brought to the paper the voice of the Russian provinces, and a concern for the preservation of the natural environment: he can be considered as one of the unsung Village Prose writers. In "Fatherland", Peskov spoke of the urgent need to preserve the nation's historical, cultural, and national landmarks, in some ways anticipating the Russophile turn that KP would make in the late 1970s.[143] Kapitolina Kozhevnikova, one of the paper's correspondents in Moldova, said that "Fatherland" illustrated the need for a concerted campaign on nature preservation. She spoke of the exploitation of nature under Stalin, and then discussed the negative impact of the Virgin Lands campaign on the waters of the Don. Calling for the paper to begin a concerted campaign on the protection of nature, she added that *Literaturnaia gazeta* had beaten them to the punch too many times, showing how criticism was not just a matter of disinterested social activism, but also a professional question of getting one over on one's rivals.[144]

Events on Lake Baikal, where an enormous cord-cellulose factory was projected, allowed KP to make the environment a priority, and led some within the paper to suggest that it had outdone even 'Literaturka' by clearly expressing its own point of view, rather than being forced to represent both sides of the

---

[141] Ibid., p.333.
[142] Vasilii Peskov, 'Otechestvo', KP 4/6/65, 4.
[143] On KP's Russophile turn, see Stanislav Gol'dfarb, *Komsomol'skaia pravda' 1925-2005 gg.: Ocherki istorii* (Irkutsk: Irkutskaia oblastnaia tipografiia No.1, 2008), pp.361-366.
[144] 8/6/65, d.383, l.12.

argument. [145] There was immense pride at the paper's socially valuable campaigning on the topic. Anatolii Iurkov, an editorial board member in the Department of Working Youth, said that "the question was the honour and pride of our country".[146] In an editorial comment to one of these articles, the editors wrote that "The reader is right to ask: what is happening, why do the powerful voice of protest and the well-reasoned position of science remain merely a matter for the honour of concerned public opinion?"[147] This appeal to public opinion against the decision was a hallmark of the paper's campaign. Articles met with a huge response from Soviet *obshchestvennost'*, including distinguished academics and even Dmitrii Shostakovich, who called the paper to offer his support.[148]

After the Prague Spring, the tasks of the Soviet press moved from technocratic transformation to bureaucratic consolidation. But, however paradoxical it may seem, the more conformist Soviet journalists were expected to be, the more heavily they pressed on with their social critique.[149] For Pankin, critical articles were important because they stood out against the backdrop of recent (and, Pankin implied, unreasonable) attacks on the paper:

> Such articles are an event in society, they set the tone in the press. Such things don't appear often. The article … shows the possibilities and the authority of the paper. These two weeks have been filled with humdrum days [будни], with a critique of our shortcomings. If we look only at that side, it could seem that there are nothing other than humdrum days at our paper. But then serious things like this come out of our humdrum days, that show that what we are doing is not in vain.[150]

The 'humdrum' was provided by an endless cycle of more-or-less interchangeable articles on patriotic themes and anniversaries, but the 'serious' was what journalists lived for. Pavel Gutiontov, a journalist who worked at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* from the late 1970s said in a 2005 article:

---

[145] Ibid., l.2.
[146] 1/6/66, d.430, l.13.
[147] 'Baikal zhdet'
[148] Anatolii Iurkov, 'V Baikale voda, u Baikala beda' in *Bol'she, chem gazeta*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), p.134.
[149] More research is required to ascertain if this applied outside the confines of central, liberal-minded newspapers like *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*.
[150] 12/8/70, d.505, l.86.

> The words "social responsibility of journalism" were never heard back then. They didn't exist, but the responsibility itself did – you can't deny that. And, amongst other things, that is what determined the social status of the journalist – an exceptionally high status, like nowhere else in the world.[151]

A curious process unfolded: in a time when criticism was being suppressed, it became more, not less central to their identity – one of the few things that made their work worthwhile. Most journalists have a story or two about a critical article they published, and, perhaps, about the abuse they suffered from the authorities for doing so. Such stories may be an exaggeration, as journalists are wont to do, and reflect the desire of many to be on the right side of history by emphasising their own bravery in the face of intimidation, but, as we have seen, the danger was real enough. A low-level battle emerged, with journalists attempting to sneak critical materials into the paper and censors trying to keep them out – sometimes successfully, sometimes not and, most of the time, somewhere in between.[152]

Pankin's comments were made in response to an article of August 1970, which intensified criticism of the authorities. "At Baikal", written by an unknown 'V. Goncharov' and Anatolii Iurkov, a correspondent in the Department of Working Youth, was an exposé of continued violations of a 1969 resolution on Baikal.[153] As far as possible, the paper, well aware of the many ruses used by the authorities to deflect criticism, tried to avoid the pitfalls. Every fact in the article needed to have a written equivalent "with a signature and a stamp". A figure from the Komsomol was to accompany Iurkov on his investigations so that he could verify everything.[154] It seems that much of Iurkov's investigation was an attempt to secure documents that would save the paper from harm when the article "was examined professionally [стали просвечивать профессионально], in order to refute and thereby end the

[151] Quoted in Roudakova, p.124 (translation modified).
[152] Roudakova, pp.91-95; Koltsova, pp.25-28.
[153] V. Goncharov, A. Iurkov, 'U Baikala' KP 11/8/70.
[154] Iurkov, 'V Baikale voda', p.135.

growing scandal of the public flogging of the author and the paper…. After all, Pankin wasn't the only one whose career was under threat."[155]

However, it was not quite enough: one day a "man from nowhere" arrived at the paper to demand of Iurkov where he got hold of his documents, which were "for official use only". The paper was also under fire for using the name of the Komsomol official (V. Goncharov) as an author, despite an explicit promise not to do so.[156] According to Iurkov, these problems threatened his career, as he already had a black mark against his name for a critical article that displeased Evgenii Tiazhelnikov, First Secretary of the Komsomol.[157] In that case, the intervention of Kosygin saved him from further punishment; in this case, it was Brezhnev, to whom Pankin had written to inform him of the issues surrounding Baikal.[158] The letter was passed to Brezhnev's assistant, Samoteikin, a supporter of the paper, and he ensured that the scandal died down.[159] However, though the facts behind the case are not known, Iurkov's departure in 1974 to the central-but-lowly Party newspaper *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia* looked suspiciously like a demotion.

The story of Baikal, just like the case of Solianik, illustrate how a critical article succeeded or failed not so much because of its content, as because of the ideological context into which it was published, an author or editor's ability to count on protectors within the Party or Komsomol apparatus, and the newspaper's cunning in ensuring that the usual ruses would be circumvented. The Baikal affair was not a disaster insofar as those involved escaped punishment. Yet this minor victory meant little, given that the factory was allowed to violate regulations on an almost daily basis. Nevertheless, journalists at KP and beyond had succeeded in bringing together critically-minded public opinion, both from within the intelligentsia and outside. Even if these issue-based groupings failed to achieve their wider goals, they were significant in shaping the social landscape of late socialism. Their very presence suggested

---

[155] Ibid., p.138.
[156] The paper did so to circumvent its *kurator*, since any item written by an official did not require vetting.
[157] Ibid., pp.139-142.
[158] Ibid., pp.135-136.
[159] Ibid., p.142.

that society was fragmenting, and that formerly loyal intelligentsia groups were no longer looking to the regime as a progressive hope for the future, but as a barrier to change that needed to be constantly pressurised. In this case, it seems that the desire of the regime to save face, to maintain a façade of infallibility despite all evidence to the contrary, outdid the desire to correct an obvious error (by 1970 even *Gosstroi* admitted that the factory's location was a mistake).[160] But this came at the price of alienating public opinion, leading to an ever-widening impasse between the values of the intelligentsia and those of the regime.

Conclusion

Criticism and self-criticism were a fixture in the Soviet press from Stalin to Brezhnev. But the compass of criticism and the context in which it was carried out had changed. Under Stalin, journalists criticised individual factory managers and workers in pursuit of a more efficient system. Such criticism was routine, and suggested that problems in Soviet society were the fault of petty individuals in the lower reaches of the Party ranks. After Stalin's death, journalists widened their focus. Empowered by the elimination of violence as a control strategy, they began to set their sights higher, and suggested that problems went beyond the lower levels of the system, and into the Party hierarchy. These attacks took on not only the clichéd devils of the past, bureaucracy and corruption, but also fought the values that underpinned them.

Of particular importance was the attempt to appeal to a Soviet educated public as a means for awakening social initiative. Journalists increasingly sought to speak for this public, rather than the Party, and this became central to their identity as public servants. Over the course of this period, criticism shifted from a means for highlighting social problems to a means for placing pressure on the authorities to eliminate them. But, despite the authorities' publicly-stated support, journalists did not receive the same backing in reality. By the mid-1950s, the practice of criticism had settled into a war of words between

[160] Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.184.

journalists and bureaucrats, with the end result resembling less a battle of evidence, and more a battle of connections.

We might thus see the regime's commitment to criticism as a cynical charade – a right, like Soviet democracy, much talked about in print, but absent in reality. But perhaps it was not that officials did not believe in the importance of criticism, but more that, in the cold light of day, the desire to eliminate these shortcomings *in general* did not translate into wanting to eradicate them *in particular*, in one's own back yard, especially if that would mean breaking the delicate web of connections that sustained regional and national power structures. It might be added that criticism was always an uncomfortable fit for a regime that was so obsessed with image management. Part of the problem, perhaps, was the propensity of Soviet citizens to read between the lines. Though journalists took pains to suggest that the shortcomings they publicised were out of the ordinary, by dint of being printed in the paper, they were nevertheless interpreted as 'typical' occurrences.[161] As a result, the regime worried about the capacity of criticism to destroy the good name of the Soviet Union internationally, and damage the Party's reputation nationally. Boris Pankin put it this way in his memoirs:

> Under Yeltsin the government made the discovery that the most reliable way of responding to criticism and accusations in the media, even if they directly touched on the honesty and merits of high-ranking figures in the government, was to pay no attention to them.
>
> But at that time, the party and Soviet big cheeses suffered from another illness: every word of criticism touching on their sphere of responsibility – be it a factory, institute, *kolkhoz*, *raion* or the whole of Ukraine – they took as a personal insult and plunged headlong into denying the criticism and pursing those who criticised.
>
> We were used to this – it was a condition of the game of cat-and-mouse which we unceasingly played with our high-ranking readers – collective and individual.[162]

The description of the practice of criticism as a game of cat-and-mouse is telling.[163] It suggests that the collegial relationship between journalists and the

---

[161] Smith, p.370.
[162] Pankin, *Preslovutaia epokha,* pp.102-103.
[163] The same metaphor is used in Alfred Kokh, Igor Svinarenko, *A Crate of Vodka. An Insider View of the 20 Years that Shaped Modern Russia* (New York: Enigma Books, 2009), pp.92-93.

regime was in the process of breaking down, and that journalists were increasingly forced to act *against* the regime, rather than as part of it. Journalists may have seen themselves as a force for progress within the Soviet Union, but viewed the regime as impeding it. This is clearly shown by the many ruses to which they resorted, ranging from misleadingly labelling material, ensuring that articles went to a progressive censor, to sending two critical articles to print to guarantee that the 'lesser evil' would be printed.[164] These were not the actions of individuals who believed that the regime knew best, but neither were they the actions of 'dissidents'. Rather, they embodied what the former editor of the monthly professional journal *Zhurnalist*, Egor Iakovlev, called a process of "fighting for [the system's] improvement, to uphold its ideals and understandings of ethical decency, of moral rectitude, of social equality".[165] In this sense, criticism provided a sphere in which journalists could exercise the power of the press to its fullest extent, however dangerous that sometimes turned out to be.

Perhaps the key difference between the Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods in terms of attitudes to criticism and self-criticism lies in the changing consequences for those who overstepped the mark. Under Stalin, campaigns were largely directed from above, and refusal to participate could lead to judicial sanction. Under Khrushchev, journalists were able to exercise their initiative in putting forward their own version of the party line. The events of 1956 at KP showed that there were limits, but even a catastrophic failure, such as when KP printed a lurid-but-inaccurate exposé of a local Komsomol leader, did not lead to a sacking for the journalist in question (though his career undoubtedly suffered).[166] The two cases from the Brezhnev era, meanwhile, were both typical and atypical. Only a very few cases involved the intervention of the very highest echelons of power. But, in a way, these cases reveal how the system of 'mutual protection' [круговая порука] and ministerial back-scratching that affected criticism at lower levels was also in place at the top. Despite being lauded as an essential part of Party democracy, the Kremlin

[164] Roudakova, pp.91-95.
[165] Ibid., p.87.
[166] 1/2/60, d.269, ll.33-34; Protokol No. 5 (KP Planerka), 30/1/60, d.266, ll.25-26.

leadership acted in much the same way as the Chairman of a *kolkhoz*, a factory manager, or the Secretary of a *raikom*: they ignored, or tried to suppress, inexpedient criticism, and sought to punish those who did the criticising.

Under Khrushchev editors might be given a roasting by Agit-Prop or Komsomol officials, but rarely felt themselves to be in any real danger.[167] Between 1953 and October 1964, not one editor of the main three papers was sacked. But between October 1964 and December 1965, five separate editors were dismissed from their posts for various misdemeanours. For Brezhnev and Suslov, the newspaper provided a means for consolidating power not for achieving radical social transformation – and they were prepared to take strong measures to ensure that they got their way.

[167] Pankin, *Presolvutaia epokha,* pp.75, 106.

CHAPTER 2 | **Making News Soviet: Changing Attitudes to Information after Stalin's Death**

"*There's no news in* Pravda *and there's no truth in* Izvestiia*"*. This popular saying, playing on the titles of the leading Soviet dailies, *Pravda* ["Truth"] and *Izvestiia* ["News"], captures Soviet readers' attitude to the lack of information in their newspapers. Indeed, it seemed to many Western observers that news was unimportant to Soviet journalists: *New York Times* journalist Hedrick Smith, illustrating the 'us' and 'them' logic of Cold War reporting, suggested that "news in our sense was not their primary concern".[1] Under Stalin, information was limited to ceremonial and official news, leaving large gaps in readers' knowledge of the world. In this chapter, I show how, following the Secret Speech, journalists began to feel that the information they were providing was inadequate and set about changing the role of news in the press. However, change was hamstrung by a conception of news that emphasised the need for positive information within the framework of Socialist Realism. Attempts to widen the remit of news reporters met with widespread mistrust, since they threatened to eliminate the link between news and 'typical' events, and risked opening the floodgates to so-called 'bourgeois sensationalism'. Although journalists increasingly recognised the importance of news, this foundational understanding of news as 'agitation with facts' remained operative throughout the period, putting Soviet news at a disadvantage when it came up against the speed and efficiency of Western news sources.

The question of what was Soviet and what was foreign is at the heart of this chapter. Audiences were now able to obtain news from western sources in greater numbers, breaking the Soviet news monopoly. The ability of western radio to transmit information quicker than domestic journalists became a source of some anxiety, and served to make timely news an urgent priority. Across this period – and in particular after Khrushchev's ouster – journalists

[1] Hedrick Smith, *The Russians* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), p.367.

and media officials discussed the need for better and more timely information, with some considering the provision of such news as an act of fundamental civic importance as well as an antidote to western propaganda. Some journalists revelled in the westernisation of media practices, and expressed pride in becoming part of a worldwide community of journalists. But for others this development was dangerous, for it threatened to introduce alien values and damage the role of the journalist as a 'researcher' of reality. For this reason, the idea of news as a narrative of progress showed remarkable resilience. Though some journalists sought to debate the role of information in the press, others remained wedded to traditional hierarchies of 'quality', which placed literary information at the top, and news (as the least 'creative' of all genres) at the bottom. At the same time, the regime continued to place limits on the reporting of certain events; this desire to disseminate *correct* messages interfered with the demands of *timely* information. Thus, as the Prague Spring approached, the development of Soviet news was hampered by forces from within the journalistic profession, and from outside it.

1 Facts and Factlets: The Epistemology of Soviet Information

In much of the scholarship on the Soviet press there has been a tendency to posit a norm to which Soviet news failed to correspond.[2] Yet, as scholars have shown, news is not a universal: concepts of news in the US have constantly fluctuated in response to changing political, economic, and professional circumstances, while news in other nations, such as Germany, has always been more focused on commentary and educational materials.[3] Speaking in 1969, Aleksandr Pumpianskii, who was well acquainted with international journalism in his role as Deputy Editor of the International Department, pertinently

[2] E.g. Wilbur Schramm, 'The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press' in *Four Theories of the Press*, ed. by Fred S. Siebert (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp.105-146; Frank Ellis, 'The Media as Social Engineer' in *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Catriona Kelly, David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.192-222.

[3] Kevin G. Barnhurst, John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guildford Press, 2001); Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.21-22.

differentiated between two different types of newspaper: the information newspaper, and the magazine-newspaper. Pumpianskii claimed that KP was a newspaper of the latter kind, meaning that it printed human-interest items which in the West were usually printed in magazines.[4] It is therefore not difficult to find differences between the news values of the Soviet Union and the United States. Take, for example, the simple news story which, in the United States, was typically understood as an essentially fact-led medium, in which so-called "fine writing" had no place.[5] In the Soviet newspaper, by contrast, news could be disseminated in a variety of genres, some of which had a claim to be literary writing as well as news.[6]

Definitions of news itself also differed. Nikolai Pal'gunov, the former Director of TASS, defined information as "new data on the facts of present-day [текущей] life of contemporary society, which it is necessary or important, useful or interesting for every member of society to know in order to live in society."[7] The Associated Press's William Pinkerton gave a less socially purposeful definition: it was "anything published in a newspaper which interests a large number of people".[8] The most pertinent difference for this chapter lies in the Soviet emphasis on news as "agitation with facts".[9] Responding to American author Theodore Kruglak, who contended that information served no master, Aleksei Adzhubei retorted that to agree with Kruglak would be to stop being a Soviet journalist.[10] That is not to say that Soviet journalism was not considered to be objective – it was the "most truthful and the most objective in the world" – but this objectivity did not mean that the

[4] 15/12/69, d.488, l.77.
[5] Quoted in Rilla Dean Mills, 'The Soviet Journalist: A Cultural Analysis' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1981, p.115.
[6] There is no single genre that translates to the English "news story": the closest would probably be the *zametka*, which refers to a short item of information, the *korrespondentsiia*, which signifies a more lengthy treatment of an event or occurrence, and the reportage, though these latter two were considered to be literary forms. See *Zhanry sovetskoi pechati*, ed. by M.S. Cherpakhov (Moscow: MGU, 1959).
[7] N.G. Pal'gunov, *Zametki ob informatsii* (Moscow: MGU, 1967), p.17.
[8] William M. Pinkerton, 'The Newspaperman' in *Reporting the News: Selections from* Nieman Reports, ed. by Louis M. Lyons (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1965), p.185.
[9] Theodore Kruglak, *Two Faces of TASS* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), 79.
[10] A. Adzhubei, 'Boevoe oruzhie partii' SP 5 (1963), 7.

newspaper should be a mirror of reality: it needed to actively analyse and commentate on that reality, too.[11]

In an article of 1960, the Deputy Editor of *Trud* argued that "simple reflectiveness [отображательство]" was alien to journalism. He claimed that in Soviet journalism: "Facts, no matter how striking [ярки] they are, are not set out for the sake of facts," and added that only "goal-oriented" facts with "social significance" had a right to be in the newspaper.[12] Similar questions of the relationship between fact and representation were frequently raised by journalists.[13] The vision of social reality that they were expected to put forward was not one of simple correspondence to what their senses told them was 'out there'. Rather, spontaneous sensory impressions had to be subordinated to conscious analysis before an image of reality could be arrived at. *Izvestiia*'s Tat'iana Tess argued that the *gazetchik* should resist the temptations of mere "photographicality" [фотографичность], arguing instead that journalists should produce real, "life-like truth" [жизненная правда], thus drawing a crucial distinction between appearance and essence.[14] Journalists were constantly directed to penetrate the surface of reality to find this hidden essence: in the words of one article, journalists "need to be able to reflect [размышлять], to interpret [осмыслять] occurrences, and not accept what lies on the surface."[15]

There was a dialectical logic to this, but there was also a cruder, political logic. Journalists needed to be able to uncover the 'typical', but the officially mandated optimism of Soviet public culture meant that, in practice, typicality was synonymous with positivity and progress. Not all 'facts' were really facts. One journalist, paraphrasing Lenin, spoke of the existence of "facts" and

---

[11] Ia Baranov, and V. Kol'tsov. 'Sred' bela dnia…' SP 11 (1962), 35; N. G. Pal'gunov, *Tridtsat' let: Vospominaniia zhurnalista i diplomata* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1964), p.267; V.D. Pel't, 'Korrespondentsiia' in Cherepakhov, p.62.
[12] I. Tiurin, 'Fakty i vyvody' SP 4 (1960), 45.
[13] See Ibid.; M. Baisman, 'Korrespondentsiia – osnovnoi gazetnyi zhanr: Osmysliat' i analizirovat' fakty' SP 3 (1957), 10-12; M. Burenkov, 'Korrespondentsiia - osnovnoi gazetnyi zhanr' *SP* 1 (1957), 10-12; Aleksandr Latsis, 'O sushchestvennom i sluchainom' SP 6 (1958), 46-47; G. Kozlov, 'Sem' raz otmer'…' SP 8 (August 1960), 36-37; E. Temchin, 'O faktakh, kotorye na poverkhnosti' SP 9 (1960), 18-20.
[14] Tat'iana Tess, 'Vstrecha s geroem' SP 10 (1957), 18–20.
[15] E. Temchin, 'Pero? Malo!' SP 11 (1963), 24.

"factlets" [фактики], the latter being merely "trivial carping at individual blunders". Instead, a news story needed to "reflect that which is characteristic for many people", adding that "[i]t is not possible … to construct a news story on some private [частный] occurrence, on an isolated fact.[16] The boundaries of genre were to some extent malleable, but, as the previous chapter showed, when the question came to 'negative' occurrences, they became far more rigid: the negative was *not news*.[17] One author recalled having written a news article on a policeman who got drunk and fell into a well: "In itself the fact was, as they say, outrageous [вопиющий], but one ought not to have written a news article on it: here, another newspaper genre was required."[18]

The extent to which Soviet journalism continued to bear the *imprimatur* of Socialist Realism is striking. Socialist Realism should therefore be considered not only as an aesthetic doctrine, but also as a means for speaking about, interpreting, and creating everyday reality.[19] In its most basic definition, taken from the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, Socialist Realism was the "representation of reality in its revolutionary development", which was taken to mean that writers should depict the present in light of the future.[20] Despite challenges from critics like Vladimir Pomerantsev, who argued in 1953 that writers had too often "strived to deliver the desirable in place of the already-existing", it was not possible to overthrow existing stylistic norms: attempts to do so were criticised as a "distortion and perversion [искажение и оглупление]" of reality, thus sending a message that Socialist Realism would not be easily overthrown in the arts and journalism alike.[21] The Soviet

---

[16] Burenkov, 10.

[17] E.g. K. Kovalevskii, 'Fel'eton ili korrespondentsiia' SP 2 (1955); Iurii Chaplygin. 'Ne suzhat' granits zhanra!' SP 3 (1956), 30–33.

[18] A. Kurlovich, 'Osmysliat' fakty' SP 8 (1958), 17.

[19] Sheila Fitzpatrick. 'Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Taste and Privilege' in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p.217; Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[20] A.A. Zhdanov, 'Soviet Literature – The Richest in Ideas, the Most Advanced Literature'. Speech at the First Congress of Soviet Writers, Moscow, August 1934. Online at: <http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit_crit/sovietwritercongress/zdhanov.htm> [Accessed: 22/12/11]

[21] Vladimir Pomerantsev, 'Ob iskrennosti v literature' NM 12 (1953), 220; 'K voprosu o tipicheskom v literature i iskusstve' *Kommunist* 18 (1955), 22. KP initially supported

newspaper aimed to show the 'typical' in society. As we have seen, the press frequently found itself under attack for its alleged overemphasis on the negative aspects of society, and praised for its dispatches on positive exemplars, such as the 'contemporaries' of the next chapter, or heroic portraits of sportsmen and sportswomen and cosmonauts. While under Stalin journalists were not even allowed to choose *where* to print an article, let alone to alter it, his death gave them a more authoritative, more interpretative role.[22] The notion of 'typicality' was not just an epithet with which to exclude inconvenient material could be conveniently labelled: it also encapsulated an optimistic view of a world in which workers selflessly and tirelessly constructed; scientists made new discoveries; and artists created new masterworks.[23] It was a view of news that many journalists would passionately defend in the years to come.

In 1958, at an "All-Union Seminar on Questions of Newspaper Information," held in Leningrad under the auspices of the Union of Journalists, the Deputy Head of the leading Soviet news agency, TASS, spoke this romantic language of progress:

> [H]ere is a pile of telegrams with reviews of the newspapers for October 26 … it's a genuine chronicle of the life of the country on one day, a tale [рассказ] of thousands and thousands of Soviet people, their labour and feats. It's a tale of those who live and labour in Ukraine, in Belarus, in Siberia, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean and in the Arctic, who are performing flights over the South Pole and undertaking scientific work on the ice of the Antarctic.[24]

Information was to serve the goals of the Party, but it needed to do more than that: as the invocation of the "tale of thousands" suggested, it had to do so in a

---

Pomerantsev (see S. Bocharov, V. Zaitsev et al. 'Zamalchivaia ostrye voprosy: Pis'mo k redaktsii' KP 17/3/54, 3), but was forced to back down after criticism. See 'O publikatsii v gazete *Komsomol'skaia pravda* pis'ma v zashchitu stat'i V.M. Pomerantseva 'Ob iskrennosti v literature'', 24/3/54 in *Apparat TsK KPSS i kul'tura, 1953-1957. Dokumenty*, ed. by V. Iu. Afiani (Moscow: Rosspen, 2001), p.211, and the paper's reaction to this criticism 7/6/54, d.129, ll.128-142.

[22] On journalism under Stalinism, see A. Kotlyar, *Newspapers in the USSR: Recollections and Observations of a Soviet Journalist* (New York: Research Program on the USSR, 1955). On the authority of interpretation see, for example, F. Krutov, and V. Sitov. 'Ob avtoritete i dostoinstve zhurnalista' SP 6 (1957), 12–14.

[23] On the optimism of the period see Petr Vail', Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998). See also 24/4/61, d.299, ll.127-132; 8/5/61 d.300, ll.3-5.

[24] B. Afanas'ev, 'Sostoianie i zadachi gazetnoi informatsii' SP 12 (1958), 9.

way that expressed the pathos of progress, and gave drama to the narrative of Soviet construction.[25]

In this regard, the Soviet press was following a model of news that dated back to the First Five Year plan, and was associated most of all with Maksim Gor'kii, who envisioned the Soviet newspaper as a chronicle of positive events. He likened the ideal reader of his *Nashi dostizheniia* ['Our Achievements'] to a stonecutter working on a construction site without seeing the overall blueprint. That worker might feel their work to be trivial and worthless if they were not able to see the achievements that had already been accomplished, and therefore fail to "feel him/herself to be one of those living forces that are building the new state". Thus, *Nashi dostizheniia* was to be a "mirror" of the people's achievements, which would "show our 'trivial' everyday work … in general, all the 'trivial' work in the factories and fields which, albeit little by little, do renew life".[26]

This model of news was thus 'Stalinist' but, although it never entirely disappeared from the press in the late Stalin period, it became far less prominent, which is why, at the paper's first Party meeting after the Twentieth Party Congress, KP journalists were urged to refer to the paper's archive of issues from the 1920s and 1930s for inspiration.[27] Evidence of Gor'kii's influence on Soviet journalism is also provided by Adzhubei's 1960 revival of Gor'kii's *Den' mira* initiative (see below), which used the prism of a single day to highlight the onward march of Soviet life. Adzhubei's prominent position at KP may also have inspired a series of special editions that ran throughout 1956, which used the background of a single day to highlight progress being made in Soviet industry and agriculture. On the front page of June 14, in an edition entitled 'One Day on the Construction Sites of the Arctic and the East', this editorial introduction appeared:

> On the page of the calendar, a number 12, Tuesday. An ordinary working day. But open up this edition of the newspaper. Read the letters, articles and

[25] See also Kruglak, pp.170-186.
[26] Quoted in Elizabeth Papazian, *Manufacturing Truth: The Documentary Moment in Early Soviet Culture* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), p.137.
[27] Closed Party Meeting, 14/3/56, d.30, l.96.

> telegrams received by the editors on Tuesday 12 June from the East and the Arctic, where the attention of our whole people is focused. How much was done on just one day, how many changes occurred on construction sites! And how many new heroes appeared, how many names, glorified by labour, have we discovered?[28]

Almost all the stories printed were from the previous day (something of a novelty in the less-than-timely Soviet press) and in their grandiloquent tone and romantic sense of discovery, they put forward a romantic vision of news reporting. These editions displayed a fruitful tension between the temporality of the everyday and the temporality of Communism. They suggest that June 12 1956, "an ordinary working day", was at the same time an exceptional day, where new feats transformed the country's landscape, and the nation advanced another step towards Communism. Absent, here, was an understanding of '*budni*' as humdrum or routine. Instead, the routine was transformed into the heroic, with the present day containing within itself the nucleus of the future, nourished by the lessons of the past. In this way, the twenty-four news cycle was contrasted with the romantic temporality of communism in a way that connected past, present and future in a chain of heroic deeds.

This was a land where labour never ceased: "At the very same minute when, in Moscow, the metro was closing and the last trams had left for the depot, the factory whistles of Vladivostok announced the start of a new working day, the leap day of February 29."[29] This labour was, the editions contended, creating a modern, prosperous society. In the March 1 edition, readers learned of industrial progress, but also about technical advances in everyday life: new models of television, washing machines and watches were all mentioned, as was a plan for the building of new, ultra-modern suburbs of Moscow, which would be fully equipped with transport connections, workplaces, shops and cultural facilities. The special editions therefore illustrated how consumption was becoming a part of everyday life.

Yet despite its pathos and emotion, this vision of news was accused of lacking drama and variety. The one and only story in Soviet domestic news was

---

[28] 'Odin den' na novostroikakh Vostoka i Severa' KP, 14/6/56.
[29] 'Na trassakh Tikhogo okeana', KP 1/3/56, 4.

that 'Communism is being built', or some variation. Life was becoming better, more joyous, but, strangely, it was also becoming more repetitive, more monotonous.[30] In 1958, experienced staff member Andrei David'iants expressed exasperation at this model of reporting: "It's either a new electric locomotive, a new combine harvester, a plough, a new book written by a worker or a book written by a cattle breeder".[31] These special editions may have proclaimed "This was yesterday", but the stories contained in them could as well have been last week or last month, or last year – and, for all readers knew, the news would be the same next week, next month, and next year, too.[32] There thus emerged a tension between the political demand for journalists to describe the 'typical', and the professional demand for information to be fresh and attention-grabbing. This was perhaps one of the reasons that, despite the fanfare and pomp, journalists remained unmoved by these editions.

Journalists' lack of enthusiasm may also have stemmed from the fact that special editions were generally made up of materials in the genre which was considered the "most simple newspaper genre", the *zametka* – one that lacked the interpretation and analysis which was thought to be an inherent quality of the best material.[33] The lowly reporter who returned from a factory and filed a report about the new Riga-55 model of washing machine was not in the same league as a *publitsist*: this was underlined by the fact that most of the articles in these editions were not signed by their authors, following the conventions of Soviet newspaper news. Few of those discussing the editions in Moscow would have written any of the material, most of which was penned by staff writers in the regions. The list of indignities was long: reporters were paid less; their stories ran without authorial credit; the head of the Department of Internal Information, unlike the heads of other departments, was not a member of the

[30] See Christine Evans, 'From Truth to Time: A History of Soviet Television, 1957-1982'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley, 2010, p.126 and the conclusion to this chapter.
[31] 12/1/58, d.242, ll.55-56. See also 12/1/59, d.242, l.73.
[32] KP, 1/3/56, 1.
[33] Cherepakhov, p.3.

redaktsiia, and therefore had no say in the everyday running of the paper.[34] The role of news reporter was seen as merely as a stepping-stone to a more prestigious role as a *publitsist*. Indeed, in the journalistic lexicon it was a synonym for failure: "I'm no more than a reporter"; "I'm thirty years old and still a reporter"; "The editor told me: 'you'll have to stay a reporter'".[35] Even those who argued *against* the continued denigration of the role merely described it as a "school" for the *young* journalist.[36]

A further problem was that the extremely positive nature of the material came to seem out of date in the febrile aftermath of the Twentieth Party Congress, after which the press required a "new relationship to facts".[37] Soon afterwards, Konstantin Taradankin argued that "the boundary between what must and "must not" ["нельзя"] be written in the press should be liquidated" and even advocated the reporting of disasters, citing the example of a recent incident at the under-construction Luzhniki stadium, about which the media had remained silent.[38] Though others did not go so far, journalists frequently connected the cult of personality with the distortion of facts: journalists and editors, it was said, had lost their connection with life, and "acquired the bad habit of juggling citations, using pre-prepared formulations, adjusting them to fit isolated facts".[39]

It is in this context of changing journalistic values that we should understand the frequent injunction to journalists to report on the world using 'typical' examples: as attempts to bolster a flagging 'orthodox' line on information. As we will see in the next section, the counter models of news reporting that were beginning to enter the scene challenged the idea that the purpose of Soviet news was to talk about processes over events, and that the reporter's own observations were unimportant. Journalists became aware of a need to be more timely in their reports and to broaden their appeal to readers,

---

[34] Iu Kuznetsov. 'Fakt - svidetel', agitator, boets: Dvadtsat' strok na podverstku.' SP 8 (1961), 21; 'Shtatnoe raspisanie redaktsii gazety *Komsomol'saia pravda* na 1958 god', 31/1/58, d.236, ll.3-8.
[35] 'Reporter', *Zhurnalist* 6 (1968), 5-6.
[36] G. Aleksandrov, 'Poisk geroia: Rasskazyvaet S. S. Smirnov' SP 5 (1964), 35.
[37] 5/3/56, d.170, l.111.
[38] Closed Party Meeting, 14/3/56, d.30, ll.101-102.
[39] "Ego odnoobrazie Shtamp': Pis'ma o serosti i shablone v gazetakh' SP 6 (1956), 8.

and also began to see the provision of information as an essential part of a modern media system. Two visions of news co-existed, sometimes uncomfortably, as the Soviet Union entered a media-saturated age.

2.1 "The Bread of the Paper": Debates about Information under Khrushchev

It might seem that the on-going problems of Soviet news were a natural consequence of its philosophical principles. But there also existed long-standing issues with the wider institutional structures through which news was collected. The Soviet 'news net' was wide – wider than in the West, claimed Soviet sources – because it included reader signals and worker-peasant correspondents.[40] However, existing structures for gathering information were unsatisfactory: the surfeit of official notices, problems with the paper's national network of correspondents, and on-going issues at TASS meant that the Soviet news net possessed as many holes as the ubiquitous *avos'ka*.

This crisis of information can in many ways be attributed to the regime's determination to monopolise the newspaper for the diffusion of various kinds of official information. Under Stalin, news pages resembled a kind of court circular, full of the comings and goings of statesmen and meetings of various bureaucrats – something about which journalists expressed their dissatisfaction even at the time.[41] This state of affairs persisted for over a year after Stalin's death, before the Supreme Soviet submitted a resolution in June 1954 that reduced the amount of official material that the paper was forced to print.[42] This was understood as a "liberation" by the paper's editor, Dmitrii Goriunov, who commented with relief that the paper would no longer have to print items on "cotton farming in Tajikistan".[43] Despite this improvement, obligatory official material such as lengthy transcripts of speeches from Soviet leaders, and the texts of important resolutions could sometimes occupy the whole of the

[40] Adzhubei, 'Boevoe', 5-6. The term "news net" comes from Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), pp.15-38.
[41] 30/1/50, d.87, l.143; 3/4/50, d.90, ll.6-7; 12/11/51, d.112, ll.64-65, 69, 79, 83, 85.
[42] 21/6/54, d.129, ll.204-206.
[43] Ibid. l.205.

newspaper, sometimes even extending the paper's length from its usual four pages to six or an unprecedented eight pages (which gives us a good idea of the priorities of the regime in a time of severe paper shortages). Adzhubei's attempt to make such material more reader friendly by printing photographs alongside official announcements were condemned by the Central Committee as an illustration of the "harmful influence of the bourgeois press".[44] The continued belief that some items were too important to be covered in anything other than sacred tones therefore meant that journalists' freedom from official material was far from total: five years later, the Deputy Editor of *Izvestiia*, A. Baulin was still able to complain that "on the pages of newspapers there are at times so many articles and news stories reflecting internal, clerical matters that any press organ is in fact turned into some sort of departmental bulletin".[45] Even in 1965 when things were beginning to change, readers in Belarus demanded that the paper should cease from printing "didactic" material where everything is "pre-chewed" [разжевано], such as general directives and resolutions. "Readers have already outgrown such material" suggested the paper's correspondent in Belarus, A. Shcherbakov.[46]

All of this attests to the fact that journalists were not in control of the information they disseminated to the public: there was always a notice, a resolution, or a speech that needed to be printed; conversely, there were forbidden subjects, like crime levels, and some events, like the situation in Hungary in 1956, or the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, where the message was considered to be so important that journalists were entirely side-lined, with the upper echelons of the party dictating the message instead.[47] When the paper's correspondent for Voronezh', Klara Skopina stumbled upon a scoop about the US spy pilot, Gary Powers, shot down on May Day 1960, her fresh exclusive rapidly turned stale as the combined forces of the new Chairman of the Supreme

---

[44] 'O nepravil'noi praktike chrezmernogo illiustrirovaniia nekotorykh gazet', 11/2/58 in *Sovetskaia pechat' v dokumentakh*, ed. by N. Kaminskaia (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961), pp.286-87.

[45] A. Baulin, 'Na bol'shom rubezhe' SP 3 (1959), 2.

[46] Shcherbakov to KP *redkollegiia*, 15/11/65, RGASPI f.98M, op.1, d.390, l.63.

[47] Robert Kaiser, *Russia: The People and the Power* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976), pp.224-225 (partial list of banned subjects).

Soviet, Leonid Brezhnev, and the military censor forced the paper to wait until the 'official' version of the story had been released.[48] Journalists' ability to report on current affairs was thus doubly circumscribed: once, by the obligation to describe 'typical' events, and a second time by the regime's refusal to entrust them with the description of those 'atypical' events on which it *was* necessary to report.

Such problems were exacerbated by the continued shortcomings of TASS, which provided around half of the paper's information, but whose material remained, as American scholar Theodore Kruglak described it, "as bland as an ulcer patient's diet".[49] Amongst journalists at KP, there was widespread exasperation about the dullness of the end product, its lack of speed, and its ineffectiveness as counterpropaganda.[50] In May 1956, Editor Dmitrii Goriunov was moved to draft a report on the work of TASS. He argued that the material provided by TASS was "uniform and covered the same themes" and written in "dry, boring language". He also charged the organisation with failing to take into account the needs of different publications, and different kinds of readers. He further denounced the lack of timeliness of TASS reports and its abundance of errors.[51] These complaints echoed almost exactly complaints made by journalists twenty years earlier.[52] At a seminar on information in the Soviet Press, held in Moscow in October 1958, TASS's Deputy Director was moved to recognise his organisation's shortcomings and a year later, at the First All-Union Congress of Journalists, the editors of both *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* criticised its work. [53] Whether this criticism made a difference is open to debate: just over half a year after the Congress, a KP journalist could

---

[48] Klara Skopina, 'Pauers – 43 goda posle provokatsii' *Nash Sovremennik* 12 (2003), 222; Oleg Ignat'ev, 'Kak sbili sensatsiiu'. URL: <http://only-paper.ru/forum/24-5071-203038-16-1300528850>. [Acessed: 10/11/11]

[49] Kruglak, p.37.

[50] 'Nekotorye zamechaniia o rabote TASS (po inostrannoi informatsii)', 1954, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.136, ll.11-13; 28/5/56, d.172, l.118.

[51] D.P. Goriunov, 'O rabote TASS', RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, ll.8-13.

[52] S. Zhdanov, 'Redaktsii gazet o TASS' *Bol'shevistskaia pechat'* (2) 1936, 27–29.

[53] B. Afanas'ev, 'Sostoianie i zadachi gazetnoi informatsii' SP 12 (1958), 11. See also A. Blatin, 'Proizvodstvennaia informatsiia' SP 12 (1958), 13; *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd zhurnalistov. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960), pp.68, 110.

still complain that "… as a rule we receive [material that is] barely readable, uninteresting for information, nothing makes it into the edition."[54]

At *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, these problems were compounded by on-going problems with the paper's network of regional correspondents or '*sobkor*'. Comprising around a third of the paper's permanent staff, the journalists who comprised the network were generally younger, more inexperienced, and less well educated than their Moscow-based colleagues.[55] As early as 1954 one could discern murmurs of disapproval about the *sobkor*'s work, and criticism continued throughout the period.[56] By 1955, the Central Committee of the Komsomol had joined the dissenting voices, noting in particular that the network cost over a million roubles a year, which prompted KP's editors to cut the network by half, establishing in its place a network of 'roving correspondents'. Despite this, a year later it continued to be said that some *sobkory* were "unable to collect facts, let along write".[57] This was an issue, since, at the same time, journalists sought to improve the paper's geographical reach through "information – small notices, which inform the reader about those events which happened in a small town, in an *oblast'* capital, in a village".[58] Yet the poor literary level of some correspondents meant that the paper was unable to ameliorate the situation: as late as 1960, transcripts of *letuchki* still contain the comments of exasperated staff members, either requesting that their colleagues take *sobkor* in hand and help them to improve their writing, or else remove their certification.[59]

All of these factors, coupled with the philosophical principle of the 'typical' on which Soviet news was founded, represented a formidable barrier to improving Soviet information. Nevertheless, the need for better information was a constant issue at KP editorial meetings, and a fixture in the specialist press. While there had been discussions of information before the Twentieth

[54] 18/4/60, d.271, l.83.
[55] Stanislav Gol'dfarb, *"Komsomol'skaia pravda" 1925-2005 gg. Ocherk istorii* (Irkutsk: Irkutsk oblastnaia tipografiia no. 1 im. V.M. Posokhina), pp.265-266.
[56] Ibid., pp.267-68.
[57] 16/4/56, d.171, ll.96-97. See also 11/6/56, d.173, l.6 ff..
[58] 2/6/58, d.227, ll.20-30, here 20. See also E.g. 20/8/56, d.175, ll.100-101; 2/12/57, d.198, ll.17-18; 16/12/57, d.198, l.60.
[59] 8/2/60, d.269, ll.55-57; 15/2/60, d.369, l.131.

Party Congress, 1956 was, once again, the decisive year in changing journalistic attitudes to news.[60] The Secret Speech, which foregrounded questions of truth, naturally led journalists to ask questions about what information the press could and should report. Il'ia Shatunovskii, the paper's satirist, told his colleagues that they "mustn't allow in even the smallest falsehood [фальш]" and that they should "educate [воспитывать] youth in the spirit of truthfulness [правдивость]".[61] Shatunovskii was among those who complained about a lack of information, with Valentin Kitain asserting that "a newspaper without information is, in the end, not a newspaper …"[62]

Events in Hungary and Poland that year brought home the importance of news reporting. KP's reporting on the uprising in Hungary illustrated the problem, with the paper's coverage restricted to a few short TASS reports with all the urgency (and brevity) of a *zametka* on the opening of a new cannery in Omsk; Pankin denounced these articles as being "intended only for stupid little children".[63] Vasilii Khomus'kov argued that TASS's misleading material on the crisis, which was printed in KP before being contradicted by *Pravda*, had placed the paper "in an uncomfortable position before readers", later adding that the paper did "not have the right, during such an interesting and complex time, to mislead readers … to inform them incorrectly."[64] Liubov' Ivanova agreed, saying that this was a question of "journalistic honour":

> None of us go to work just for the money. We are used to considering ourselves to be party workers, propagandists, who are obliged to respond to topical questions. In this case, we can call our situation unpleasant, to say the least.[65]

The language of public service, the idea that information was the reader's right, and a sense of responsibility towards readers was explicit in these comments. But there was another consideration. Allan Starodub, the Head of the paper's newly-created Department of the Youth Festival, told colleagues of a recent trip to Novosibirsk, where people could easily pick up the broadcasts of the Voice of

[60] For pre-1956 discussions see Vera Benderova's comments: 21/11/55, d.153, ll.52, 56-58.
[61] 19/3/56, d.170, ll.43-44.
[62] 18/6/56, d. ll.60, 65-66, 68, 77, here 65.
[63] 5/11/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, l.75.
[64] Ibid., ll.63-65.
[65] Ibid., l.89.

America and the "so-called objective" coverage of the BBC.[66] Starodub called for the Party's Central Committee to act, and asked why the paper didn't attempt to counter such broadcasts, which, he pointed out, were listened to by youth in particular.[67] Indeed, evidence shows that media sources from both West and East were pieced together by Soviet citizens, who used them to challenge the accounts of events in Poland and Hungary put forward by Soviet sources.[68]

Many at the paper suggested that the inability to counter these voices was not just a question of prohibitions from above. Ivanova had spent time in Poland, noting that it was "not appropriate" for the paper to criticise the affairs of a "fraternal country". Nevertheless, she added that "If they'd asked me to speak out, I wouldn't have been able to do that, because we have been badly educated in the spirit of defending our ideas".[69] Iurii Voronov, picking up on Ivanova's remarks, said that it was less a matter of journalistic honour, and more to do with the fact that journalists were "often not able to go to war with [their] ideological opponents, with polemics, with facts, and total erudition".[70] Pankin, while agreeing that higher Party organs should act, suggested that the problem was more fundamental: "There is another matter, where nothing is interfering with us speaking, and we put up barriers ourselves. We have an editor or a censor standing in our heads, who says "you can't do that; they won't print that".[71] Whether prohibition from above or self-censorship was the cause, the case remains that it was only in December, six weeks after the uprising, and more than five weeks after the meeting, that the paper responded with a 'definitive' account of events in Hungary, which charged sensationalistically, but

---

[66] Ibid., l.73.
[67] Ibid., ll.73-74.
[68] Tat'iana Kosinova, 'Sobytiia 1956 g. v Pol'she glazami sovetskikh dissidentov' in *Korni travli: Sbornik statei molodykh istorikov*. L.S. Eremina, E.B. Zhemkova, eds. (Moscow: Zvenia, 1996), pp.193-215; Amir Weiner, 'Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises' in *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, ed. by A. R. Johnson and R. E. Parta (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2010),p.304; Benjamin Tromley, 'Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Harvard University, 2007, pp.279-280, 285.
[69] 5/11/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, l.89.
[70] Ibid., l.91.
[71] Ibid., l.75.

unconvincingly, that the uprising was an outbreak of fascism.[72] This was not to be the last time that the Party's desire to be correct conflicted with the need to be timely.

Media competition did not just come from outside, however: the sources of change could also be domestic. First published on July 1, 1956 the new daily *Sovetskaia Rossiia* was the official newspaper of the Central Committee Bureau and the Soviet of Ministers of the RSFSR, and instantly met with the approval of readers.[73] In a climate where newspapers were being encouraged to compete with each other – partly for prestige, and partly for resources – the neophyte's success caused a stir at *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, who saw that a rival publication had stolen a march on them – and, indeed, stolen one of their best information 'enthusiasts' in Andrei David'iants. Journalists at KP had very little doubt that superior information was the reason for its rival's success.[74] *Sovetskaia Rossiia* prided itself on printing a range of interesting, punchy stories: in one edition, taken at random, one could read the travel notes of one member of the State Circus, who had travelled around Belgium, France and Britain; a story about a Soviet expedition to the Antarctic; a *zametka* about the provision of clothing for children; a news item about a parachuting competition; and the story of a swindler who had spent eight years in jail for theft of state funds, who managed to swindle another enterprise within months of his release.[75] (Just to show the limits of change, one could also read an editorial entitled "Improve the Production of Agricultural Produce" which took up almost the entire front page.[76]) Though *Sovetskaia Rossiia* was criticised for the tendentiousness of some of its information – in particular its predilection for that perennial

[72] 'V vengrii podnimal golovu fashizm. Chto proizoshlo v vengrii?' KP 11/12/56, 4.
[73] Anatolii Blatin 'U zhivotvornogo istochnika' in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki*, *Tom 2.* ed. by V. A. Miakushkov and N. P. Stor (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980), p.256.
[74] 6/5/57, d.193, ll.20-21. See also Blatin, p.256; Egor Iakovlev, 'Pressa ravna obshchestvennomu sostoianiiu' in *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty*, ed. by A.I. Volkov, M.G. Pugacheva, S.F. Iarmoliuk (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), p.262.
[75] All items from *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 21/7/56, 4.
[76] 'Uvelichit' proizvodstvo produktov sel'skogo khoziaistva', Ibid., 1.

favourite, court reports – it was nevertheless widely imitated.[77] Its influence on KP could be glimpsed in its reports on the apparent sighting of the Abominable Snowman in the Pamir Mountains of Central Asia.[78] The story attracted considerable interest amongst the public, and even resulted in a lengthy investigation into the sightings, conducted through the Academy of Sciences. [79] The results were inconclusive.

The brevity of *Sovetskaia Rossiia*'s stories, in particular, challenged the 'more is more' philosophy that was widespread in journalistic circles. Allan Starodub admonished his colleagues for continuing to favour wordy articles over short ones, claiming that it was "far more difficult and more boring for our readers than short and catchy material".[80] However, this diagnosis was not accepted by all. Shatunovskii, shortly to depart for *Pravda*, said approvingly of one story: "The *Sovetskaia Rossiia* correspondent wrote a fifteen-line information article. Here, Sakhnin wrote a whole page".[81] Implicitly, Shatunovskii's comments concerned not just length, but genre: for him, the *ocherk* outranked the *zametka*. This suggests an important point about the inability of journalists to improve the provision of information in the press: the high prestige of the word-heavy publicists (which boosted the literary culture of the newspaper) meant that there was literally no space in the newspaper for information.[82] Many literary (and therefore respected) journalists refused to see their material cut, since doing so reduced the "authorial aroma" – and also, charged some, their pay packet, since honoraria were paid by the word.[83] So while information was seen as the "bread of the newspaper," KP remained on "starvation rations".[84] Indeed, given continued problems with the paper's

[77] Afanas'ev, 'Sostoianie', 10; Blatin, 'Proizvodstvennaia', 13.
[78] 'Vstrecha so 'snezhnym chelovekom'', KP 14/1/58, 4; B. Porshnev, 'Legendy? No, mozhet, oni dostoverny!' KP 11/7/58, 3.
[79] Prezidium AN SSSR: Postanovlenie 'O resul'tatakh raboty Komissii po izucheniiu voprosa o 'snezhnom cheloveke'' 23/1/59, RGANI, f.5, op.34, d.53, ll.78, 79-94.
[80] 6/5/57, d.193, ll.21-22; 12/3/56, d.170, l.101.
[81] Party Meeting, 13/12/61, d.35, l.167.
[82] 18/6/56, d.173, ll.65-66; 2/6/58, d.227, l.28; Kuznetsov, 20-21. Research at *Trud* in the late 1960s showed that the average length of an information piece was 21 lines, while the average length of a sketch was 330. Iurii Skvortsov, '*Trud* glazami chitatelia' *Zhurnalist* 7 (1968), 47.
[83] 30/5/55, d.129, ll.77-78; 16/11/67, d.458, l.174.
[84] 6/1/58, d.223, l.74.

sobkor network, continued inadequacies at TASS, and the regime's desire to control information, it is difficult to disagree with Adzhubei's comment to his KP colleagues that the Soviet press had not yet "found a place for information".[85]

But it could be argued that the failure to provide adequate news coverage was as much cultural as it was institutional. It is telling that, by and large, 'news' [новости] was not an established part of the journalistic lexicon under Khrushchev; instead, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had a 'Department of Information'.[86] One book on American newspapers considered American yellow journalism's concept of news to be so alien that he refused to dignify it with the term *novosti*, instead translating it with the foreign-sounding «ньюс».[87] Even when journalists returned from the apparently 'fraternal' states such as Poland and praised their provision of information, there remained unease over how this led to information that was "not particularly correct" and led to "demagoguery".[88]

Could news ever be 'made Soviet' when there existed a reflex association of information with sensationalism? M. Baisman, a journalist from Estonia, argued that data, concrete circumstances, and the broadcasting of information were essential qualities but nevertheless maintained that an *Izvestiia* story on a kidnapping should not have been published, since it was an "out-of-the-ordinary event under the conditions of Soviet reality".[89] At KP even senior journalists at the paper who accepted the need for improved information nevertheless expressed unease at the implications. Speaking in 1961, Shatunovskii told colleagues at a Party-Komsomol meeting that: "At times you can pick up the paper and not know what happened yesterday, what was the main, stirring event of yesterday that the country lived through. Telling is the lack, not just of trivial information, but, in the main, of vivid, indicative facts from our life."[90] Taken in isolation, it might seem that Shatunovskii was endorsing an

[85] 12/1/59, d.242, l.73.
[86] For this reason, the renaming of *Sovinformbiuro* as "News" (APN: *Agentstvo pechati "Novosti"*) in 1961 can be seen as a statement of intent (Kruglak, pp.219-220).
[87] Nikolai Zhiveinov, Kapitalisticheskaia pressa SShA (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956).
[88] 27/8/56, d.155, ll.140, 158. The fact that the visit was in 1956, sandwiched between the Poznan crisis and the unrest of October, may have something to do with these conclusions.
[89] Baisman, 11-12.
[90] Party-Komsomol Meeting. 13/12/61, d.35, l.163.

information-led newspaper – and in some ways, he was. Yet his subsequent criticism of colleagues for what he regarded as a "search for the sensational" illustrates his awkwardness at the implications of such a development. "Comrades are simply delighted when they find out that someone somewhere hanged themselves, or some other fearful thing," charged Shatunovskii, adding that

> in some of our journalists has appeared a tendency to search for rotten facts [факт с червоточинкой], for defects [с ущербинкой]. The newspaper must observe the proportion of good and bad that one meets with in life. The attraction to defective facts [ущербными фактами] violates this proportion, creates one-sidedness [однобокий], and a grey, lacklustre background the newspaper, against which it is difficult for flowers to bloom [трудно распуститься цветам].[91]

What was at stake was not simply the threat of deviation from the typical ideological parameters of the Soviet newspaper, but its very identity. Deputy Editor Boris Pankin displayed a similar vacillation between recognition of the need for better information:

> We need different material. Which? If we take the news of the bourgeois press, there they have murders, accidents, and disasters. We are deliberately renouncing that. We are against bad [дурной] sensationalism, but also against dry material. We need to find a third line.[92]

Journalists recognised the need for information, but only seemed able to define its meaning apophatically. Thus, journalists were torn between their desire to maintain the traditionally understood boundaries between 'positive' and 'negative' while, at the same time, making information more interesting for readers. Was there a "third line"?

2.2 Adzhubei's Dialectics: *Den' mira*

For Aleksei Adzhubei, it *was* possible to plot a course between the newspaper as 'chronicle' of positive news and the press as a 'modern' collection of interesting information. An enthusiastic moderniser and passionate believer in Soviet superiority, Adzhubei carried these beliefs into his views on information: he

[91] Ibid., ll.163-164.
[92] Ibid., l.63.

was keen to improve the quality of information in the paper, and to update forms of news gathering, sometimes borrowing from the West to do it, but he also believed that information needed to be partial to be truly Soviet.[93] Indicative of this attempt to plot a course between two different forms of information was Adzhubei's grandiose attempt to remake one of the last projects to be initiated by Maksim Gor'kii before his death, *Den' mira* [Day of the World]. The first edition in 1937 aimed to make sense of the world at that time, and analyse the Soviet Union's place in it through the prism of a single day, September 27, 1935.[94] Similarly, its 1961 successor aimed to provide a "multi-coloured panorama" of the world, and give an account of the progress the Soviet Union had made in the quarter of a century since the first edition.[95] The project involved all Soviet media outlets in contributing stories on the events of September 27, 1960, from personal milestones, such as the birth of a child, to national triumphs, such as a new landmark in the construction of a factory – first of all for publication on September 28, 1960, and later for what would become a glossy 800-page book.[96] *Den' mira* would describe the state of the world, country by country, by reprinting stories from the world press on the events of September 28, as well stories Soviet foreign correspondents. Beset by delays over the lavish nature of the production (the book had to be printed in Austria because its complexity was too much for Soviet printing technology to cope with), the book made its untimely appearance in late 1961 – albeit in an edition of only 700 copies.[97]

The book – and the initiative as a whole – could easily be dismissed as a vanity project. Adzhubei was by this time the most powerful figure in Soviet journalism, whose connections to Khrushchev (he was married to Khrushchev's daughter, Rada) helped him to get almost any project off the ground – despite

---

[93] William J. Eaton, 'Red Editor: Aleksei Adzhubei' *Nieman Reports* 16/2 (June 1963), 12.
[94] Maksim Gor'kii, Mikhail Kol'tsov, *Den'* mira (Moscow: Zhurnal'no-gazetnoe ob"edinenie, 1937)
[95] "O nashei knige" in *Den' mira* (DM), ed. by Aleksei Adzhubei (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1961), p.796.
[96] See KP 28/9/60, 4; 'Vozmuzhali serdtsa, okrepli ruki', *Izvestiia* 26/9/60, 3 and 27/9/60, 1-3.
[97] Iurii Filonovich, 'Istoriia odnoi knigi' in *Soldaty Slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 1.* ed. by A. A. Mandrugin and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976), pp.314–316.

the frequent opposition of Mikhail Suslov.[98] A glossy 800-page colour book in an edition of only 700 copies would surely have been a non-starter without his backing. Yet the book itself demands that we read it as something other than mere hubris. As Thomas C. Wolfe has argued, *Den' mira* was a statement of what Soviet journalism could and should be as it entered a critical stage in its development.[99] Indeed, the book presents us with the Adzhubei vision writ large. It was entertaining and dynamic, both in terms of visual and textual content, and was as little scared of sensationalism (witness how it pruriently borrowed from the Western press in the name of 'exposing' its foibles) as it was of blowing its own trumpet.

These dualities were carried over into the book's vision of time.[100] The book put forward what Stephen Hanson has called a 'charismatic' vision of Soviet time, which saw the successes of the present as a sign of the future, just as the special editions had done in 1956.[101] However, it also emphasised what Hanson calls a 'rational' conception of time as the progression of the hours and minutes on the clock face: "life, like the sun in a drop of dew, is reflected in lived twenty-four hour periods with a whole mass of events, actions and the hubbub of humanity [шум человеческих]."[102] The job of the journalist was to take readers by the hand and lead them through the "hubbub" of an information-saturated world:

> The world is in constant motion. Time flows from the future to the past, it is eternally new, and can never happen twice, just as one cannot step into the same river twice... But each fact and each event, as if paused for a moment in the reader's field of vision, acquires a special significance and suggests to them: look, think – we are just one link in a chain, judge the previous one, search for the next one.[103]

---

[98] T.Volkova, 'A.I. Adzhubei – retaktor i publitsist' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. MGU, 2010, pp.354-355. On the antipathy between Adzhubei and Suslov, see Rada Adzhubei, 'Reshaiushchii shag byl sdelan' in *Press v obshchestve*, p.30.
[99] Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Soviet Person after Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp.49-67 [49].
[100] Ibid., p.52.
[101] Stephen E. Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill, NC; London: North Carolina University Press, 1997), pp.174-177.
[102] Nikolai Gribachev, 'Novyi oblik planety' DM, p.12.
[103] Ibid.

Den' mira therefore provided a description of the journalist as an essential guide to a world in constant Heraclitan flux. And they were able to do so, the book suggested, because of the growing technical know-how of the Soviet media. Of particular pride was its ability to cover Khrushchev's speech to the UN, which provided proof of the globetrotting status of the Soviet journalist.[104] Indeed, Soviet media figures were becoming more and more confident about their abilities to meet the requirements of modern mass communications. In former TASS Chief Nikolai Pal'gunov's memoir, 'Thirty Years', the author recalled a meeting with an American newspaper tycoon, who bragged about the technical abilities of US media:

> [Tycoon:] "Do you have any radio stations?"
> [Pal'gunov:] "Yes, of course!"
> "How many? One? Two?"
> "Significantly more!"
> "But how many? Five? Ten?
> "TASS possesses more than twenty-five radio stations"
> "Oh, that's worthy of attention. But why do you have so many radio stations?"
> "TASS has more than four thousand clients"
> "You must be richer than me!"
> "You want to say that TASS is richer than you? It probably is!"[105]

And so the conversation continued, through teletypes, telephotos, cables, and other technologies, until his interlocutor sloped away despondently. The question of technology was an important one for Soviet media figures who sought to eulogise their own prowess in instantly transmitting world events to the people, and paint a vivid picture of a media that was able to compete with the rest of the world in conditions of Cold War technological rivalry.

But *Den' mira* did more than simply claim that Soviet journalists were able to *compete* with the West: it placed the Soviet Union at the centre of the media universe. As Thomas Wolfe has pointed out, the book described a clear spatial hierarchy in terms of politics, with Soviet life shining the brightest; the satellite states following its example; Latin America, Africa and Asia throwing

---

[104] Iurii Filonovich, 'U samogo istoka' DM, pp.788-790; Viacheslav Chernyshev, 'Planeta u nas doma' DM, pp.790-791. This visit to the UN was the occasion for Khrushchev's alleged shoe-banging protest.

[105] N.G. Pal'gunov, *Tridtsat' let: Vospominaniia zhurnalista i diplomata* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1964), pp.294-295.

off the chains of oppression; and Western Europe and the United States in terminal decline.[106] This spatial hierarchy extended to the book's interpretation of journalism. While the Soviet Union, as described by its journalists was moving towards Communism, the capitalist press showed how the bourgeois world was drowning in its own vulgarity:

> Perhaps in reading some of the material from the bourgeois press such as, for example, a chronicle of high society, marriage announcements, horoscopes, clearly fraudulent advertisements, etc. a question might form in the mind of Soviet readers with their natural seriousness, and deferential relationship to the press: is it worth putting in the book such trifling rubbish? In our opinion, it is. These things are an unavoidable component of any bourgeois newspaper; by using them, even minimally, the book gives the reader an idea of the character and outlook of that press.[107]

The book was to ultimately stand as proof of the superiority of Soviet journalism over its bourgeois counterpart, to capture it at the moment of its inevitable triumph. One section claimed that the book "exposes the nature and character of the press of two opposing social systems: the new, victoriously strengthening socialist system, and the old capitalist system, categorically doomed by history itself".[108] Given these bold assertions, it is fitting that the book was dedicated to the moment in Soviet history at which romantic hopes would be tested against unyielding reality: the Twenty-Second Party Congress, and Khrushchev's promise that Communism would be built by 1980.[109] *Den' mira* therefore looked to the past and future, and provided an image of an increasingly self-confident media.

Den' mira stood at the crossroads of two different visions of Soviet news. On the surface, it remained faithful to Gor'kii's model of journalism, giving a picture of relentless positivity, of achievement unconstrained, and suggesting Communism's inevitable triumph. But it also presented a normative picture of journalism throughout the world which suggested similarities, not differences.

---

[106] Wolfe, pp.61-67. On the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of Soviet news, see Christine Evans, 'A 'Panorama of Time': The Chronotopics of *Programma "Vremia"* *Ab Imperio* 2 (2010), 121-146.
[107] 'O nashei knige' DM, p.796.
[108] Ibid.
[109] DM, p.1.

It suggested that there existed a worldwide community of journalists performing their duty of collecting facts and reporting on their respective societies. Indeed, the generally negative picture that the book painted of many countries would not have been possible without the work of non-Soviet journalists, whose stories were taken as objective and honest. Moreover, by focusing intensely on the 'Day of the World' as the horizon of journalistic activity, the project described the proper object of reporters' attentions in a manner that was strikingly similar to their ideological opponents. The intense focus on the day as a twenty-four hour news cycle, and the whole world as the stage upon which that news unfolded, implied that the true job of Soviet journalists was to report back on the world around them in a timely fashion. In this regard, *Den' mira* dialectically mediated between the old and new in Soviet media practices, in much the same way as a news story was supposed to reconcile past and future.

Den' mira was an ideal, however. Its picture of September 27, 1960 was the end product of dozens of meetings and only saw the light of day almost a year after the events. But in the real world, events were unpredictable, and the vagaries of the news cycle gave journalists little time to produce a workable picture of the world. In the real world, journalists still had to keep within the restrictive boundaries of the 'typical'. In the real world, western news sources were broadcasting their image of the world to Soviet citizens within minutes, while Soviet journalists' response had to wait for Glavlit approval, not for minutes, not for hours, but sometimes for weeks.[110] In this sense, the relation of *Den' mira* to everyday journalistic practice was somewhat like the relationship of a Soviet news story to everyday life under Khrushchev: it bore some relationship to everyday reality, but omitted many of the difficulties that were at its heart. It is for this reason that journalists returned to the question of news with renewed force after Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964.

---

[110] Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.162; Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p.119.

3.1 Trespassers welcome?

In June 1963, the Soviet leadership took a decision that was to have profound consequences on the practice of Soviet news and, consequently, on the way the country was ruled. The reasons for the termination of jamming are unclear, but it seems that there were both diplomatic and pragmatic reasons for the policy. On the diplomatic side, the Soviet authorities used the possibility of ceasing jamming as an incentive for foreign broadcasters to tone down their broadcasts, and as a means for 'leaking' to the Soviet public news that they could not broadcast themselves, but wanted people to hear through selective breaks in the jamming signal.[111] From the pragmatic point of view, it was increasingly recognised that jamming of signals was not only expensive and unreliable (by 1958, expenditure on jamming exceeded that spent on domestic and foreign radio put together), but also a blunt instrument to tackle what was also a problem with Soviet media itself: its lack of speed.[112] Foreign radio presented its rival with a challenge: outlets like *Voice of America* proved themselves to be simply faster in getting their bulletins out and forced Soviet media to adapt.

The increase in listeners to 'the voices' was made possible by two parallel tendencies. A lack of consistency between the economic requirements of industrial planners and the Party's overriding ideological objectives meant that profitable shortwave radios were produced in increasing numbers, despite the fact that only Western stations broadcast on shortwave frequencies.[113] At the same time, Soviet citizens – and especially young people who had grown up without trepidation of Stalinist reprisal – no longer saw anything wrong with listening to Western stations.[114] The abandonment of jamming caused confusion, with some Party members taking the Party's decision as proof that foreign radio listening was now ideologically acceptable – despite attacks in the

---

[111] Maury Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union: International Politics and Radio* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp.8-19; Nelson, pp.93-94.
[112] Roth-Ey, pp.131-132; See also the *spravka* from the Committee for State Security: 'On the State of Jamming Anti-Soviet Radio Programs of Foreign Radio Stations', 19/5/59 in Johnson/Parta, pp.533-536.
[113] Roth-Ey, p.145.
[114] Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.146-150.

Soviet press.[115] Khrushchev was unconcerned, however, telling his Presidium colleagues just before the adoption of the policy: "There will be a few listeners – let them listen".[116] However, research undertaken after his ouster suggests that he was wrong to be so sanguine: two years after his ouster it was revealed that in Lithuania a third of students were listening to foreign radio, while up to seventy per cent of the Estonian population were watching Finnish television.[117]

The 1963 policy capped a longer-term process through which print journalism lost its pre-eminent role in delivering information. Resolutions of 1960 and 1962 had already established a clear hierarchy of news provision, placing radio in first place in the queue for TASS reports, and only then followed by the press.[118] Audiences were getting their information elsewhere: according to a survey conducted in 1963, eighty per cent of individuals now got their news primarily from the radio.[119] This presented a dilemma for print journalists, for if timeliness was now to be the overriding value of a news story, then broadcast journalism would always have the edge. This led print news in two, somewhat contradictory, directions. On the one hand, there was thought to be a need for print news to differentiate itself by moving towards commentary over the reporting of mere facts. In an interview, the author and editor of *Iunost'*, Valentin Kataev, spoke of the need for the press to publish more information that could "stand up to "competition" with the information services of radio stations, which there and then broadcast fresh news which has just been received" and demanded "more of an appeal to the mind [*lit.* больше «игры» ума]" in print news.[120] The increasingly prominent role of the eye-witness

---

[115] Lisann, p.24.

[116] Zasedaniia Prezidiuma TsK KPSS (25/4/63) in *Presidium TsK KPSS. Tom 1: Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanii. Stenogrammy*, ed. by A.A. Fursenko et al. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004), p.715. See also Lisann, pp.25-26.

[117] Roth-Ey, p.143.

[118] Ibid., pp.159-60. That said, radio remained wedded to the rhythms of the press, see the Central Committee Secretariat Decree 'Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda', 21/7/60 in Johnson/Parta, p.543, which mandated the creation of a 25-minute news programme to be broadcast hourly, but which demands that the content should be news *commentary* and a digest of the evening edition of *Izvestiia*.

[119] Adzhubei, 'Boevoe', 6. These findings are borne out by surveys of émigré sources, which found a preference for radio over the press. Rosemarie Straussnigg Rogers, 'The Soviet Audience: How it Uses the Mass Media'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. MIT, 1967, pp.131-140.

[120] S. Grigor'ev, 'Dalekoe, blizkoe: Rasskazyvaet Valentin Kataev,' SP 3 (1964), 34.

reporter, exemplified by writers like Vasilli Peskov, and the figure of the 'political reviewer' who would provide an authoritative spin on current events can be seen as attempts to combine the need for fresh, new, information *and* the need for analysis.

But it was most of all the form of radio news that presented a challenge, and this pulled print news in a different direction. It had long been recognised that the rapidity of foreign news presented a challenge to Soviet practices. As early as 1960, an Agitprop report admitted that the brevity and speed of American news reporting presented a powerful alternative to domestic news.[121] The regime's response to this was to privilege stations like the international flagship Radio Moscow and, in 1964, to create a new news source: *Maiak*, which placed news at the centre of their operations, broadcasting five minutes of news, which largely favoured new facts over commentary, followed by twenty-five minutes of music.[122]

The opening of *Maiak* and rivalry from the west had important consequences for the practice of Soviet news reporting. At a meeting of the Union of Journalists in 1964, the ideological challenges of western news were a central theme. Genrikas Zimanas, editor of the Latvian newspaper *Tiesa*, argued that, the greater flexibility of western news would require the removal of the "taboo" over information in the press, for "there are things that become known sooner or later and we need to say something about it". The failure to do so, he argued, was driving audiences into the arms of foreign radio, after which stories became far more difficult to rebut.[123] Many others at the meeting echoed his thoughts. Khrushchev's departure from the scene in October 1964 does not appear to have made a profound difference to the processes opened up by the abandonment of jamming the year before. Indeed, from 1965 onwards, the end

---

[121] Weiner, 310.

[122] *Maiak*'s broadcasts were to "contain timely information … on the most important events of economic, political, and cultural life in the USSR and in western countries …". See the Central Committee Resolution 'Ob uluchshenii informatsii po radio' in *KPSS o sredstvakh massovoi informatsii i propagandy. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), pp.551-552. For more on *Maiak* see Roth-Ey, pp.167-174.

[123] 'Stenogramma vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia publitsistov. Tom II' 4/6/64, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.301, ll. 19–20. My thanks to Mary-Catherine French for helping me to locate this, and many other references from the Union of Journalists *fond* at GARF.

of jamming was confirmed, while a *Kommunist* editorial suggested that Soviet journalists were now in out-and-out competition with their western counterparts.[124]

However, Soviet journalists were not able to enter into that competition on a level playing field. While a number of articles spoke of the need for greater timeliness in news reporting, in 1965 an official in the Party's Ideological Department argued that the speed of news was "not a technical, but a political question. The task is not simply to be quick, but to be sure that information fulfils a determined educational function."[125] In other words, Soviet journalists should be aware of other considerations apart from the need to compete with western news. For this reason, Soviet media was slower out of the blocks than its rivals, the inevitable consequence of the regime's desire to get its version of events *correct*, over getting it out *quickly*.

This gave rise to a chorus of voices arguing that Soviet media sluggishness was giving succour to the country's enemies. In 1966, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Maiak* warned journalists at the Second Congress of Journalists: "We cannot forget that the airwaves are open, not just for our radio broadcasts, but also for those of our ideological opponents … And if the broadcast of the "Latest News" is late with broadcasting news … then we not only lose radio listeners, but also cede ground to our ideological opponents".[126] *Izvestiia* editor Lev Tolkunov commented: "Where we are silent, others speak; where we are late with our truthful words, the disinformation and lies of our enemies resound. And it is far more difficult to change someone's mind than it is to convince them in the first place."[127]

An unsigned article printed in *Zhurnalist* in 1968 demanded that Soviet news reporters satisfy their readers' inquisitiveness, no matter what the subject:

---

[124] See the unofficial announcement of the policy: 'Antisovietizm – odno iz glavnykh napravlenii v ideologii sovremennogo imperializma' *Kommunist* 10 (1965), 64-77.
[125] Lisann, p.42.
[126] 'II s"ezd soiuza zhurnalistov SSSR. Stenograficheskii otchet' 28/9/66, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.301, l.218. See also the comments of Dmitrii Goriunov, ll.49-51.
[127] Lev Tolkunov, 'Slovo est' delo' *Zhurnalist* 7 (1967), 5. See also Roth-Ey, pp.160-61; Bonch-Bruevich, '100 stranits'.

> Reporters, more than anyone, must have a sense of their readers. Is this or that fact of interest to them? If it is, then the reporter does not have the right to pass it over, even if at first glance it seems insignificant. There is no such thing as an information desert, and the readers will satisfy their curiosity somehow, but in that case news may come to them from dishonest sources. It has been shown time and again that a lack of openness in the periodical press is one of the reasons for rumours and idle talk.[128]

This advice, suggesting that reporters did not *have the right* to stay silent on matters of interest to readers suggests that the language of public service was becoming linked to greater provision of information, rather than the moral and ethical guidance that it had usually been associated with. Indeed, news was understood as one of the ways to build a better, more progressive society. As we see from the quotes above, information was frequently spoken of as the reader's 'right', and as a civic necessity. An article printed in 1968 claimed that by printing a column of information on political affairs, *Taganrogskaia pravda* had broken down the door from which a sign saying "No trespassing" had previously hung:

> But now, every time the editors of *Taganrogskaia pravda* print such a chronicle, it is as if they are appealing to the reader: "No, trespassing is not forbidden in your town. And we are not going to decide what you should know and what you should not; you have the right to know everything – to take everyday control over the work of people to whom you have entrusted your affairs.[129]

"Openness, comprehensive and prompt information," the article continued, "is an indispensible condition for the further democratisation of the life of our society [общественной жизни]. Only a well-informed person, well-oriented in all problems, is capable of taking fruitfully playing a part and taking initiative in social matters".[130] Here, news was seen as an inherent part of a flourishing civil society.

A reading of *Sovetskaia pechat'* and *Zhurnalist* after Khrushchev's ouster illustrates the fact that journalists were increasingly integrating information into their understanding of quality journalism. One might have expected Soviet

---

[128] 'Reporter', *Zhurnalist* 6 (1968), 6.
[129] 'Shirota informatsii - doverie chitatelei' *Zhurnalist* 4 (1968), 4.
[130] Ibid. See also Tolkunov, 'Slovo', 4.

journalists to condemn the intrusion of "dishonest sources" into the Soviet airwaves – and they regularly did.[131] But, as Rilla Dean Mills has shown, there was also grudging praise.[132] An article on the BBC's broadcasts to the USSR – printed in the spirit of "never losing contact with your opponent" – was, despite criticism of the organisation's propaganda, remarkably positive about its professionalism, its stature, and grudgingly admiring of the resourcefulness of the organisation's methods.[133] In the same publication, Grigorii Ratiani praised *Le Monde* for being a newspaper for the bourgeois who opposes Communism but "does not want to deceive him/herself" and demands that there be "at least one press organ from which one can find out what is really happening in the world and in France". Whether bourgeois or communist, "[a] journalist," claimed Ratiani, "must be a patriot of his/her newspaper".[134]

One article even quoted from a poem by Rudyard Kipling, written while he was working as a correspondent for a newspaper in colonial Lahore. The article's author stated that, while he "wholly and completely rejects and deplores the adventurism and brigandage of British Colonialism," he "cannot but value the professional exactitude of Kipling's definition of the essence of the reporter":

> To be next to, to be at the epicentre of those events and concerns that your people and nation are living through … to share its bitter sorrow and heady successes is to live as a real reporter…. then, when others have allowed themselves to fall asleep, he finds the strength to continue to work, in order to share the news and his thoughts on events with those who cannot be with him today, but who tomorrow have the right to know about events.[135]

The reporter was an individual who contributed to the public good, granting the public their right to information in difficult – and sometimes dangerous – circumstances. It was not just KP's Vasilli Peskov who would seize on a UNESCO report that had recently been published that asserted that journalism was one of the world's most dangerous occupations: "But it's unlikely that *one of our*

---

[131] For example, Sergei Goliakov, 'Zdes', u nas v Amerike' *Zhurnalist* 7 (1968), 62-63.
[132] Mills, pp.105-109.
[133] Vladimir Osipov. 'Kliuchi Bi-Bi-Si.' *Zhurnalist* 5 (1968), 56–59.
[134] Anri P'er [Henri Pierre], 'Le Monde' *Zhurnalist* 3 (1968), 43. See also G. Sagal, 'Samoe trudnoe – vodit' peryshkom po bumage' SP 10 (1966), 39-41.
[135] Pavel Barashev, 'Polstroki o reportazhe', *Zhurnalist* 12 (1967), 26, cited in Mills, pp.105-106.

brothers, learning of such a statistic, would decide to change profession".[136] For all that it was condemned *ideologically*, the Western media world was painted as exciting, fast, and glamorous: "Fleet Street is ceaseless telephone calls from New York, Moscow, Cape Town, Hong Kong … Fleet Street is the round-the-clock machine gun fire of hundreds of teletypes, it is the sound of a thousand typewriters.[137] Such articles suggested that journalism was a "special calling", which "transcend[ed] even national and ideological lines" and in some ways suggested a trans-national community of journalists, united by their commitment to news.[138] By connecting the formerly alien role of the reporter with a dangerous, fast-paced, and internationally connected profession, as well as a potentially socially progressive one, these articles suggested that the reporter had gained a certain stature within a Soviet journalistic *milieu* that had initially rejected it.

At *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, changes in attitudes to information after Khrushchev's ouster were instantly visible to readers. In 1965, a large portion of its front page was given over to a new daily section entitled simply '*Novosti*', featuring short notices from the USSR and the world. The section was produced by the newly renamed 'Department of News'. These changes were the result of a number of wide-ranging discussions over the role of news at the paper. A number of 'creative-production meetings' discussed the KP's future direction, including questions of style, creativity – and, most frequently, information. These meetings were frequently the cause of heated debates amongst staff at the paper, which showed that the prestige of being part of a world 'community' of reporters might not quite have displaced more commentary-based understandings of news.

At a creative meeting in 1966, Ervant Grigoriants, who worked for the paper's Institute of Public Opinion (see Chapter 4), ruffled feathers by claiming that journalists had "violated the nature of the fact in trying to turn facts inside

---

[136] Vasilli Peskov, 'Shelest stranits, kak shelest znamen' *Zhurnalist* 10 (1967), 7 (emphasis added). See also Barashev, 'Polstroki'.
[137] Lev Nosov. 'Ulitsa novostei.' *Zhurnalist* 1 (1968), 42.
[138] Mills, p.109.

out [вывертывать] depending on [their] conceptual schemata [умозрительных схем]". He claimed that the facts printed by the newspaper should be "free of gibberish [от языковой шелухи] which interferes with perception [восприятию]".[139] Instead, he spoke in favour of the American models of information, speaking knowledgeably about the "inverted pyramid", the "lead" and other imported news concepts.

Unsurprisingly, many at the paper resisted Grigoriants' conclusions, which seemed to challenge the interpretative foundations upon which Soviet news was based. According to the Head of the Department of Sport and Military Education, Valentin Liashchenko, his ideas would mean that: "we don't need the sketch as an artistic whole, we don't need subtext." Liashchenko added: "I would support his program if our newspaper was like a Western information bulletin. Happily, our press is not going down that path: we have both the fact and the interpretation of the fact, and emotion, and intellectualism."[140] Another correspondent, a certain Privanov, argued that Grigoriants' programme was unsuitable for a Soviet press that was, in comparison to the American press, "significant for its facts and thoughts, and not so lightweight".[141] Marina Cherednichenko, meanwhile, claimed bluntly that Grigoriants wanted to "eradicate intellectualism".[142]

Grigor'iants claimed his words had been misinterpreted, agreeing that the Soviet newspaper was different to its American cousin, but argued "we still need to learn – both from our friends and even from our enemies. The delivery is not the goal, but the means for achieving the goal.[143] But to learn from one's enemies was to completely change the nature of the Soviet newspaper – and its intellectual status. By sidelining interpretation in favour of raw facts, Grigoriants had threatened Soviet journalists' claims to embody a superior form of knowledge. 'Interpretation of facts' [осмысление фактов] was not merely a restrictive practice, but also a means for maintaining the claims of the Soviet

[139] 18/10/66, d.438, l.24. Similar criticisms continued to be made in later years: 'Reporter', 6.
[140] Ibid., ll.35-36.
[141] Ibid., l.40. See also ll.36-37, l.42.
[142] Ibid., l.42.
[143] Ibid., l.44.

journalist to be part of what Benjamin Tromley has called the 'cultured intelligentsia' against anti-intellectual and foreign conceptions of news.[144]

One anecdote is illustrative. In the late-1960s, a student in MGU's journalism factory was given a brochure by his tutor, an unnamed *Komsomol'skaia pravda* journalist. It had been secretly translated from a foreign news agency and the student, Leonid Skakunov, was particularly struck by this "wonderful textbook, written not in a scientific-sounding fashion, but in normal language with examples".[145] The book contained valuable information on craft of writing a news story and, for a class assignment, Skakunov illustrated how Soviet journalists were less interested in satisfying the reader's demand for a clear description of events, and more in displaying "how beautifully [they were] able to write". Unfortunately for Skakunov, he had not done what was asked of him, which was to use the brochure to write a critique of the bourgeois news story, which was "not needed in Soviet journalism". As a result he was awarded a fail. Only when fellow students explained that this would mean the loss of his stipend, did the tutor agree to grant him a pass.[146]

Two competing conceptions of the journalist's social role were in conflict. Many at KP retained the idea that a reporter should analyse reality and give commentary. For them, the true task of the journalist was to search out the essence of Soviet everyday life and transmit that reality to readers: this vision of the world would be their service to the public. For others, like Grigoriants, the reporter's mission was also to serve the public – only in this case, timely and informative factual material was considered to be of more importance than authoritative commentary. It is difficult to discern the exact balance of opinions about news within the *redaktsiia*. It should be pointed out, for example, that even Grigoriants' critics generally agreed that news was a priority – indeed, the paper was devoting far more attention, and far more column space to the question of news than ever before. Yet, in the absence of an alternative vision of Soviet news, the majority of the information that was printed cleaved to the

[144] Tromley, 'Re-Imagining', pp.57-63.
[145] Leonid Skakunov, *Zhurfak 65-70* (Vladimir, 1999), p.39.
[146] Ibid., pp.39-40.

slow and cautious analytical model of the press that had previously existed, showing that there were limits to how far Western influence and its reflected prestige could extend.

3.2 Tashkent 1966

On 25 April, 1966, an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter Scale struck Tashkent, killing ten people, injuring 1000 and, according to official statistics, leaving 300,000 homeless.[147] The quake and its aftershocks eventually caused the "slow demise" of the city's buildings and infrastructure, leading to the spread of infectious diseases due to inadequate sanitary conditions in stifling conditions.[148] The Soviet media's response to the tragedy provides an interesting example of the possibilities and the limits of Soviet news in the early years of the Brezhnev era. While it is often asserted that the Soviet press did not cover accidents and disasters, this is a misapprehension.[149] Soviet coverage of disasters was typically directed from above, and, by comparison with Western media, received less column space, while its articles sought to reassure readers and co-ordinate relief efforts, rather than dwelling on negative images of devastation. All the same, coverage was certainly not absent: an earthquake in Armenia in 1931 was a fixture in the paper for almost two weeks following the tragedy, as was the earthquake in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan in 1948.[150]

Nevertheless, such coverage was increasingly felt to be inadequate. At a 1964 meeting of Soviet publicists at the Union of Journalists, Dmitrii Priliuk spoke of the press's failure to satisfy reader curiosity by dealing with disasters: "Something unpleasant happens; something sad but important. Readers are concerned about it; they listen to the radio, search for a message in the paper.

---

147 Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2010), p.252.
148 Ibid., pp.252-253.
149 John Murray, *The Russian Press from Brezhnev to Yeltsin: Behind the Paper Curtain* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1994), pp.31-32; Frank Ellis. 'Review of Thomas C. Wolfe, 'Governing Soviet Journalism'' *Slavonic and East European Review* 85/1 (2007), 166.
150 See KP, 5-13/4/31, all p.4; *Pravda*, 7-13/4/48.

In vain…. shamefully we stay silent".[151] Priliuk spoke of the fact that the press had not covered a fire in the public library in Kiev for several days, leading to "philistine" rumours. He concluded:

> The paper wrote about a tragedy in a stadium in Peru, but on the misfortune of their own city, nothing … What else remained for the curious? Nothing other than to tune their radios to the BBC or the Voice of America. … The question is: who benefits from our embarrassment?[152]

Estonian radio had already pioneered the clever ruse of ensuring that their news broadcasts always contained details of accidents and disasters, ostensibly to make a point about safety, but also to gain listeners' trust.[153]

Soviet media as a whole was not so flexible, as coverage of the Tashkent earthquake was to illustrate. Early reports, while noting the destruction of buildings and casualties, claimed that Tashkent was "living a normal, measured life" where, "as always, the streets were lively".[154] Although a small photograph was printed on the front page, a measure of the paper's priorities can be garnered from the far greater amount of space devoted to the story of a female tractor driver's experiences at the Twenty-Third Party Congress: 'Traktoristka? Da!' This low-key coverage continued over the days that followed: a report notified readers that Brezhnev and Kosygin had arrived in Tashkent; another report informed them of their departure.[155] Nothing in the early coverage of the disaster marked any sort of change from the way such disasters had been reported in the past – in fact, the Ashgabat earthquake of 1948 actually received significant more publicity than Tashkent.

Indeed, it was *radio*, not the press, that broke the veil of silence, illustrating the new informational hierarchy in the Soviet media. The exact reasons for the change in approach are not clear. An article in *Sovetskaia pechat'* suggested that Brezhnev himself stepped in to demand "full, prompt,

---

[151] 'Stenogramma Vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia publitsistov. Tom 1' 3/6/64, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.242, l.24.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Lisann, pp.28-29.
[154] 'Zemletriasenie v Tashkente' KP 27/4/66, 2.
[155] 'Zemletriasenie v Tashkente. L.I. Brezhnev i A.I. Kozygin v Tashkente' KP 27/4/66, 1; 'Ot"ezd L.I. Brezhnev i A.I. Kosygin iz Tashkenta' KP 29/4/66, 1.

and … sincere information".[156] This would not have been out of character: the same month he argued on Soviet radio that "the supply of fuller information to the people about what is occurring inside the country and in the international arena" was one of the media's key unresolved tasks.[157] A number of newspapers, including *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Sel'skaia zhizn'*, *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*, sent correspondents to cover the disaster; KP dispatched Vasilli Peskov, whose reporting on Gagarin had won him a Lenin Prize and made him a household name.

Press coverage of the earthquake fitted neatly into a wider propaganda campaign which attempted to create a new myth of "the unified effort of the Soviet people to raise the Uzbek capital from the rubble as fast as possible."[158] Peskov's article stated that it was the "earthen, one-storied Tashkent that suffered, on the whole; the new, multi-storied Tashkent did not suffer at all" and expressed faith that the city would arise from the ruins: "Our main duty is to construct a new Tashkent. This city which has become known to the world must rise up, pretty and strong."[159] The articles by Peskov and *Pravda*'s Nikolai Gribachev (the latter far more explicitly) formed part of a narrative which ultimately justified the homogenisation of the Silk Road city of Tashkent into an identikit Soviet city.[160]

These articles also brought to the fore the notion of the journalist as eyewitness. Peskov set himself the task of "find[ing] out how it was" and, by experiencing the aftershocks, was able to say to readers "I can tell you myself how it was …"[161] Peskov described for readers the ruined buildings, the fight to attend to the injured, and carried interviews with a number of inhabitants of the city. In this sense, Peskov and Gribachev's articles placed them in the category of what Géraldine Muhlmann has called the 'witness-ambassador', a reporter who seeks to confront the public with a test which first divides, but ultimately

---

[156] Lisann, p.52. Further research is needed to ascertain the role of Western broadcasting in the regime's decision.
[157] Quoted in Lisann, p.64.
[158] Stronski, p.255.
[159] V. Peskov, 'Drama i podviga Tashkenta' KP 15/5/66, 4.
[160] Stronski, Ch. 9.
[161] Peskov, 4.

brings together the social body at a higher level.[162] Both articles began by asserting the terrible suffering of the people of Tashkent, and ended by asserting the eternal brotherhood of the Soviet people, and the values of the system under which they lived. As Gribachev wrote:

> Never has a single bourgeois state in such circumstances done anything similar, nor could it! Not the pitiful crumbs of the philanthropic rich and senile hypocrites, but a first-class concern of the state – such is the social and socialist meaning of these measures.[163]

The regime's response to the quake had, in both authors' eyes, proved its enduring humanity and flexibility. For Gribachev, even Soviet bureaucracy could be turned into a unifying principle:

> There's no point in hiding the fact that we sometimes rather passionately abuse the bureaucratic thorns in our institutions – real or apparent. But in these days, even to our own amazement – we should have known! – that one can see with one's own eyes the organisational complexity and flexibility of our society, the whole extraordinarily fast-acting and reliable mechanism of its self-management. And there arises a respect towards it, as a powerful and wise power, capable of opposing terrible experiences, defending the human against them. And, in a special way, not dogmatically, but through direct perception, one understands what is meant by Soviet collectivism, and the community of interests and fates.[164]

Here, Gribachev brought the public together through a social 'common-place' (disappointment with Soviet bureaucracy) which was then sublated into a celebration of the political order. Previous reporting on disasters, which was constrained by the straightjacket of bureaucratic formulae, was unable to do anything similar, and thus the warmth and humanity of both Peskov and Gribachev's articles seemed to signal the dawn of a new kind of Soviet reporting.

An article in *Sovetskaia pechat'* written by Iurii Kruzhilin, the Head of the Department of Information at the Russian-language Uzbek newspaper *Pravda vostoka*, interpreted the leeway granted to journalists as a step forward for Soviet journalism. The article described the publishing of information in the days following the quake as a battle against inertia:

---

[162] Géraldine Muhlmann, *A Political History of Journalism*. Trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp.61-111.
[163] Nikolai Gribachev, 'Tashkent v mae' *Pravda* 15/5/66, 3.
[164] Ibid.

> We needed to write something for the edition …
> And then the correspondent of a Moscow newspaper appeared: "I'm not going to deliver anything. And I'd advise you not to. There's no need to make an unhealthy sensation out of the earthquake".
> Then came a correspondent from an agency: "What? Write about it? Tomorrow everybody abroad would reprint it".[165]

Here, we see familiar fears on display: that reporting on disasters would inflame the public mood unnecessarily and provide counter-propaganda for the West. Thus, Kruzhilin concluded that his experiences in Tashkent illustrated how Soviet media continued to suffer from "information inertia", adding that "[t]o some it still seems that an earthquake can happen anywhere, just not here." He argued that the fear of "stir[ring] up terror" held by some journalists really just showed a lack of trust in readers.[166]

In Kruzhilin's article, coverage of the earthquake in Tashkent was proof of journalists' brave service to the public: journalists in Tashkent were "among the first to enter the battle with the elements" and "on the alert" [начеку].[167] Kruzhilin wrote: "What the reader is worried about today defines the direction of journalists' efforts", adding that the journalists had asked themselves "[w]hat help can we offer to the population? The city is shaking all the time, and people, having lost their homes, want to know what will happen. Right now information for them is as important as bread."[168] And thus, the coverage of Tashkent returned to the question of information and its socially progressive function. In Kruzhilin's article, timely information was not just as way of improving the newspaper, but a matter of life or death.

In many ways, coverage of the earthquake was testament to the contradictions of Soviet news reporting in the mid-1960s. The fact that Peskov and Gribachev's reports eventually appeared three weeks after the event does not reflect well on the timeliness of Soviet news. Though journalists were granted the possibility of reporting on an area of Soviet life that had largely

---

[165] Iu. Kruzhilin. 'Sem' s polovinoi' *SP* 6 (1966), 38–39. See also Viktor Veselovskii, '12 ballov muzhestva' RT (12) 1968, 4.
[166] Ibid., 38.
[167] Ibid., 38, 39.
[168] Ibid., 39.

been untouched, old habits were hard to change. Peskov himself admitted as much in his comments at an editorial meeting:

> We're used to saying: "write about that"…. We're used to saying: "In the Soviet Union there are no earthquakes and no floods". We sat for eight days and waited for Rashidov [First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party] to call and say: "children, you can write"…. On the day of the earthquake a journalist from *Komsomol'skaia pravda* should have been in Tashkent. It's another matter whether they would have managed to print anything, but someone should have been there. As it turned out, there was no particular obstacle preventing us from printing such material. We need to draw an important lesson from Tashkent.[169]

Despite their bold words, journalists were still waiting for that phone call before reporting – even after the loosening of restrictions. It would be harsh to apportion blame to them for this: for a journalist the potential rewards for speedy reporting were more than outweighed by the prospect of punishment for transmitting information that the regime disapproved of. Indeed, the regime provided no showcase example that confirmed that a speedy response to events was required more than approval from 'upstairs'. This is the single main reason that debates over information rumbled on, seemingly without conclusion, for four long years.

However, despite the disappointing conclusions, the lessons of Tashkent lingered long in the memory. Under *glasnost'*, the example of Tashkent was cited by Soviet sources as an example of what a responsible press should do. One *Sovetskaia Rossiia* reader, angry at the lack of coverage of a recent earthquake in Tajikistan, cited the press's humanistic coverage of the Tashkent earthquake as an exemplar, calling it "a great lesson in internationalism, kindness and Soviet responsiveness". He warned: "The ideological losses from reporting information too late or not reporting it fully are too great."[170] The lesson was taken on board: when a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit Northern Armenia in December 1988, the Soviet government permitted far more information than ever before to come to light, and even allowed foreign press

---

[169] 1/6/66, d.430, l.12. See also similar comments from Goriunov: 'II s"ezd Soiuza zhurnalistov SSSR. Stenograficheskii otchet' 28/9/66, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.301, ll. 45–46.

[170] 'Continuing the Topic – 'Being Well Informed': There Won't Be Grounds for Rumours' *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, January 5 1986, translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (CDSP), 38/1 (1986), 23.

and television crews to visit and report from the scene.[171] The pressing problem of Soviet disasters had finally become a non-issue.

Conclusion

At 8.30pm on New Year's Day, 1968, a Soviet institution was born. *Vremia* ['Time'] was a 45-minute television news report that aimed to create a definitive account of daily events. It was not the first news programme that had existed on Soviet television, but in its form and content, but it was the most successful and the most enduring. Unlike its more commentary-based predecessors, *Vremia*'s creators spoke in the language of events, clearly setting itself the goal of presenting a definitive statement on the day's occurrences.[172] One of its protagonists said of the programme in 1969 that it was the "television equivalent of the day … in which our very epoch speaks in the language of facts and events."[173]

The appearance of *Vremia* on Soviet screens marked the endpoint of a decade-long process that saw the print media supplanted by broadcast media in news reporting. By 1970, former KP journalist Nikolai Biriukov was able to demand that *Vremia* should "contain a summary of all political information of the day, including material that the papers publish only the following day."[174] This is illustrative of a wider shift in Soviet mass media policy, where visual media (film and television) largely supplanted print media as the most important weapon in the regime's armoury.[175]

However, the creation of *Vremia* did little more than transfer the long-standing problems of Soviet news from print to screen. As Christine Evans has shown, *Vremia* struggled to solve a problem which newspaper journalists had long been wrestling with: how to create a form of news that was both dynamic enough to rival western news, and 'typical' enough to be Soviet. Under new *Gostelradio* chief Sergei Lapin, positive stories proliferated, particularly in the

---

[171] Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.67.
[172] Evans, 'From Truth', pp.97-98.
[173] Ibid., p.87.
[174] Quoted in Ibid., p.116.
[175] On this point see Elena Prokhorova, 'Fragmented Mythologies: Soviet TV Mini-Series of the 1970s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh, 2003.

form of hagiographical portraits of Soviet citizens. But, by focusing on the 'typical' events of Soviet everyday life on a daily basis, Soviet life came to seem predictable and drab. By contrast, international events, not subject to the comforting historical certainties of Marxism-Leninism, were full of dramatic unpredictability.[176] If the result of this impasse was not quite disengagement from Soviet media (the popularity of *Vremia* attests to this) it did cause Soviet audiences to question official sources – particularly when, as media figures had warned in the 1960s, foreign media got there first, as they often did.

It was the inability of Soviet media elites to confront the contradictions of Soviet news, and the inability of Soviet ideological elites to relax the long-standing rules of representation that undergirded them, that caused this impasse. Journalists constantly circled around the key issue: the extent to which the Soviet press could modify its model of news without compromising its identity. While the forms of journalism inherited from Gor'kii seemed to be safely Soviet, they were also ill-adapted for a Soviet Union that was becoming part of a global media network. Journalists were to some extent flattered and to some extent aghast at this development. On the one hand, they basked in the reflected glory and excitement that the image of the reporter gave them; on the other, they recoiled at the excesses of western 'yellow' journalism, and the 'dumbing down' that «ньюс» represented. Unvarnished information was essential for a democratic, modern society, said some journalists; it was a step towards a "factological" newspaper and an attempt to "annihilate intellectualism" claimed others.[177]

The invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and the crackdown on heterogeneity that it triggered, represents a natural endpoint to this chapter. It certainly put an end to the regime's brief flirtation with the more open reporting of events that had begun with the creation of *Maiak*. Over the course of 1968, there were ever-louder rumblings of discontent within Soviet government and mass media about the deleterious effects of foreign radio. At the April 1968 Plenum, with political ferment growing in Eastern Europe, Brezhnev demanded

[176] Evans, 'From Truth', pp.86-136.
[177] 18/10/66, d.438, ll.42, 44.

that Party organisations and the media go on the attack against "bourgeois ideology" and negative tendencies within the arts. Once again, the passions of intellectuals, the political situation in Eastern Europe, and mass media were linked. However, that same month, a new publication illustrated the dangers of foreign broadcasts. *The Chronicle of Current Events*, a *samizdat* publication printed in Moscow may have had only a very small circulation, but it counted Western journalists among them. In its very form it mocked the reluctance of Soviet news to broadcast raw information, printing short items about recent events, without commentary. Western broadcasting of information on the court cases of Siniavskii and Daniel' and Galanskov and Ginsburg in 1966 and 1967 interfered with the stage management of trials against dissidents, and forced Soviet news media onto the defensive.[178] A feedback loop between dissidents, foreign media, and Soviet mass media became evident: dissidents would publish a story, western media would broadcast it to the Soviet public, and the official press would be forced to change its carefully manicured line in response.[179]

It was clear that foreign counter-propaganda had forced Soviet news media onto the back foot. But now, rather than continue to argue for more open and timely reporting as they had before, voices began to advocate jamming as a potential solution. Maury Lisann has suggested that jamming was far from a foregone conclusion, and only the desire to prevent foreign media coverage of the Czechoslovakian crisis dictated its return, timed to coincide with the invasion on August 22.[180] It may have seemed to the authorities that their problems were now over. However, the policy prompted protests from the US government, which swiftly resumed broadcasting on the long-wave bands it had vacated.[181] Soviet authorities were once again confronted with the fact that jamming was ineffective, with newspapers periodically forced to rebut foreign news reports.[182] Most tellingly, the policy failed to resolve the key problem of what Soviet news should look like. It was still a genre in search of a form, and

[178] Lisann, pp.57, 91-92.
[179] On this point see Barbara Walker, 'Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West: Attitudes Toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s' *Kritika* 9/4 (2008), 905-927.
[180] Ibid., pp.101-102.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid., pp.101-103.

would remain so throughout the Brezhnev era. In its unceasingly positive representation of the Soviet people, and its repetitive incantations of authoritative slogans, we might say that Soviet news – on television and radio as in print – not only failed to capture the dynamism of everyday life, but actually produced something else, something "sluggish" and "anaemic" – something, in fact, quite like stagnation.[183]

[183] Aleksei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until it Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). "Sluggish" and "anaemic" come from Lapin's assistant, Enver Mamedov's description of Soviet domestic news in 1973, quoted in Evans, 'Panorama', 144.

CHAPTER 3 | **Edited Subjects: "Letters, Diaries and Notebooks of Our Contemporaries" and the Rise and Fall of *'Romantika'***

"The Trans-Siberian! The Mainline! I'm going!"[1] So began the diary of Liana Danilenko, a young woman from Khar'kov, who journeyed to a small settlement in Siberia, overcoming self-doubt and adversity to set up a 'university' of culture.[2] Danilenko's diary was a document of optimism in which she expressed her happiness at arriving in Siberia, her rapture at the beauty of the nature surrounding her, her joy at bringing culture to the masses. Such diaries were printed frequently in the press of the 1950s and 1960s, playing an important role in disseminating images of the contemporary hero(ine). This chapter, by paying close attention both to the articles and to journalists' discussions about them, provides an insight into the diverse and changing meanings of heroism in the decades following Stalin's death, as well as into the significance of the vague-but-ubiquitous notion of *romantika*.

It could be argued that Khrushchev-era romanticism was merely a media construct, designed to promote Soviet achievements and shore up public support for the regime. Articles about the affirmative aspects of Soviet life, from its industrial achievements to heroic feats, were seen as an important counterweight to press portrayals of shortcomings, and stories of exemplary individuals imbued with high-minded romantic ideals played a fundamental part. This was considered to be of particular importance at newspaper aimed at young people, whose readers needed to be prevented from slipping into dangerous nihilism. Journalists tapped into an important vein of *Wanderlust* both within official and unofficial Khrushchev-era culture, with the lure of faraway places a dominant trope.[3] This reflected a utopian belief in the

---

[1] Liana Danilenko, 'Ia poliubliu tebia, Sibir'!' KP 8/3/61, 3-4.

[2] On universities of culture, see Gleb Tsipursky, 'Pleasure, Power, and the Pursuit of Communism: Soviet Youth and State-Sponsored Popular Culture During the Early Cold War, 1945-1968'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011, pp.312-336.

[3] Petr Vail', Aleksandr Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka*. *2-e izd.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1989), pp.126-138.

Communist future, but also nostalgia for the past; a desire for exploration and individual fulfilment, but also for the melding of the individual will with the collective.

Diaries like Danilenko's formed a key part of this long-standing campaign to describe the contemporary hero. Her name, and those of unpretentious youths like Valia Chunikhina, Viktor Golovinskii, and Ol'ga Popkova became part of a new pantheon. With their romantic view of the future, their spirit of self-sacrifice, and their unpretentious tone, they were perfect exemplars for the Khrushchev era. What was most important about them was that they were ordinary: prone to doubt and to making mistakes, natural and sincere – quite unlike the airbrushed Stalinist' *bogatyrs* that leapt out from the pages of the press in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet behind this artless exterior, journalists were in charge of polishing and 'perfecting' readers' contributions, making autobiographical texts a particularly literal example of 'constructing' the contemporary hero. By tapping the newspaper's behind-the-scenes debates, we see that journalists acted not as custodians of an inviolable personal text, but as retouchers, who needed to purge texts of all "stupidities". The paper's contributors were thus doubly written.

But although journalists sought to perfect readers' histories, the stories they (co-)produced showed signs of strain. Journalists seemed unable to resolve a number of tensions lurking beneath the surface of the promised Communist society. Heroes were trapped between building a glorious future where the shiny objects of consumer modernity blazed bright, and renouncing all comforts and all objects as an unacceptable distraction. Thus, this chapter asks the wider question of how these young heroes, and the journalists who 'made' them, understood the meaning of Communism in an era of mass consumption.

The chapter concludes by asking what happened to the Soviet hero after Khrushchev was deposed. It suggests that Soviet discourse entered an extended period of sobriety which rendered the romantic voluntarism of the Khrushchev era obsolete. With the regime attempting to reorient the economy along technocratic lines, journalists became increasingly dubious about the merits of

utopian optimism, in an era where rational calculation was seen to be more worthy than hazy utopianism. As a result, the rubric appeared more out of inertia than enthusiasm, as journalists lost the spark of romanticism that had sustained it.

1 The Emergence of *Romantika*

> For some reason the paper only seeks out "unusual" circumstances when describing great feats [подвигов]. Meanwhile, thousands of young men and women are accomplishing wonderful feats in labour and in ordinary, everyday life, even if they don't realise it themselves.[4]

So stated *Pravda*'s press review of May 1953, an article which criticised the paper for its negative focus, saying that the paper "tells youth how it should not live, and shows too little about how one ought to live". As we have seen in the previous two chapters, journalists at KP found it difficult to strike a balance between positive and negative. In September 1954, the Komsomol Secretary of the Gremianchinsk *gorkom* complained that, alongside the condemnation of hooligans and drunks, there needed to be more positive examples showing the *right* way to live.[5] A year later, Shatunovskii was criticised by a fellow journalist for an article on hooligans which was "insufficiently vivid or condemnatory", and, in places displayed "a certain romanticism" of hooliganism.[6] The eventual solution was to counter this romanticism of the 'outlaw' with a more constructive romanticism of adventure. This section examines the evolution of attitudes towards so-called *romantika* between 1953 and the beginning of the "Contemporaries" rubric, in 1959.

On the face of it, the regime's February 1954 call for young, enthusiastic cadres to nurture agriculture in the Virgin Lands should have provided an opportunity for the paper to present an optimistic view of the world, and revitalise a newspaper till searching for direction after the Stalinist period. But although thousands heeded the party's 1954 call to work in the Virgin Lands, journalists bemoaned their inability to find an adequate line for the campaign.[7]

---

[4] 'Byt drugom i nastavnikom molodezhi' *Pravda* 22/5/53, 2.
[5] 6/9/54, d.131, ll.26-32. See also Voronov's comments: 1/11/54, d.133, l.40.
[6] 16/5/55, d.148, ll.40-41.
[7] 24/5/54, d.129, ll.66-68; 6/9/64, d.131, l.1; 1/11/54, d.133, l.4.

Indicative of this lack of inspiration was the diary of agronomist Anatolii Kuzulin, who was shortly to travel to Kazakhstan to answer the party's call.[8] Containing little of the sincerity and humanity that characterised later efforts, dialogue was stilted and narrative tension almost entirely absent. The problem, claimed the paper's theatre critic, Natella Lordkipanidze, was that the paper's coverage lacked drama and excitement: it was guilty of the Stalinist sin of "conflictlessness" [бесконфликтность]. "To dream is a characteristic of youth", she said, paraphrasing Kalinin, before asserting "I think that we need to be a bit more romantic".[9]

However, this 'romantic' mission sat uncomfortably with some journalists, who felt pangs of remorse for the young people they had sent to Kazakhstan, who now found themselves in the most difficult and deprived conditions. A clear tension opened up between the demands of positive propaganda, of which Kuzulin's diary was an example, and the paternalistic desire to protect their young readers by publicising shortcomings. An April 1954 report sent to Dmitrii Shelepin, the First Secretary of the Komsomol, by two of the paper's correspondents described appalling conditions in Kustanai and Akhmolinsk.[10] Mass hooliganism and drunkenness were rife; individuals were allocated to roles without regard to speciality; there was a lack of equipment and spare parts; and above all a complete lack of organisation: one group was stranded at a local railway station in the snow, with nobody from the local Komsomol having been informed that they would be arriving. But the paper's coverage continued to tell a very different story, leading tens and thousands of Komsomols to wend their way to Kazakhstan unawares. In June 1954, Semen Garbuzov, the paper's Responsible Secretary, spoke of the paper's "enormous guilt":

> We sent a large brigade of Komsomols on this large and important task. And we forgot about them…. People came to a new place completely unprepared for having to live in such basic [в таких мало-мальских] cultural conditions. People are not offended by the absence of living quarters, nor by the sometimes bad

[8] Anatolii Kuzulin, 'Nachalo puti', KP 22/2/54, 2.
[9] 15/2/54, d.127, ll.92-93.
[10] N.Drachinskii, Iu.Falatov to A.Shelepin. 3/4/54, d.135, ll.65-71.

> supplies. They're offended by the lack of organisation … thanks to which they cannot give what they would like to give.[11]

Indeed, many years later, one woman recalled her thoughts on arriving in the Virgin Lands: "Why did they tell us it was so great here? On the radio it said how in Kazakhstan, how it couldn't be better than that."[12]

A second wave of discussion took place after the Congress of 1956. As we saw in Chapter 1, journalists proclaimed the importance of criticising shortcomings and righting social wrongs, with Shatunovskii declaring that the paper would no longer print material which would "embroider [приукрашивать] reality". But he nevertheless argued that positive material was more vital to the paper than negative:

> We can show youth how they shouldn't live and educate them on that basis. But those materials which show youth how they should behave and act and how they should live are no less important…. We have had an enormous bias towards critical materials, and printed less positive. I think this ratio of positive to negative material needs to be evened out, and not in favour of critical material.[13]

It is striking how central the notion of the positive hero was to journalists' understanding of the de-Stalinised newspaper. As we have seen in previous chapters, journalists were intensely worried about the mood of Soviet youth, including widespread manifestations of hooliganism and non-conformist ideas among the intelligentsia. According to this way of thinking, only by reasserting a positive ideal of what the Soviet Union was about could the task of rebuilding begin. Garbuzov spoke of the problems of a whole generation having been brought up under the cult of personality. In order to counter the "unbelievable scepticism" of young people, he suggested that there was only one solution: "propaganda of revolutionary traditions, labour feats, and heroism of the everyday".[14] But he saw a need for a new kind of positive material to provide

---

[11] 28/6/54, d.129, ll.176-77.
[12] Michaela Pohl, 'The Planet of One Hundred Languages: Ethnic Relations and Soviet Identity in the Virgin Lands' in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, Willard Sunderland (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p.245.
[13] 19/3/56, d.170, l.44. See also Ibid., ll.57-58 and Closed Party Meeting, 30-31/7/56, d.30, ll.114-115; Party Meeting, 25/12/56, Ibid., l.170.
[14] 5/3/56, d.170, l.113.

stability: "we have to affirm our revolutionary traditions, to affirm the role of the party, we must show the great, war-like feats of the people in a different way than before".[15]

In May 1956, the party issued a second appeal for young people to build the future in the Virgin Lands, the Arctic, Siberia, and the Donbass, providing a chance for journalists to put their post-Congress debates and discussions into practice. But, at the first *letuchka* at which the paper's approach was discussed, journalists ran into the very same problems of balancing romanticism with criticism. Il'ia Kotenko saw something "frightful" in a conversation he had with a tenth grade student, who was about to depart for Siberia but had learned everything he knew from old guidebooks. He noted bitterly that students "have a completely incorrect conception about Siberia in general, even though they're tenth graders, they study, they read newspapers and they're Komsomols".[16] Garbuzov backed Kotenko, arguing that tenth graders without life experience and training would have "absolutely nothing to do there. They're a burden on the state." Why, he asked, did they have to be trained on the job in faraway places? Couldn't these young people be trained in their own towns?[17] Karel'shtein agreed:

> *Romantika* is a good thing. But when a person comes across great difficulties, when things at work aren't going well and in day-to-day life some things don't run smoothly, it's bad. A valuable and important thought is that we need to prepare people for an important job, not just talk about *romantika*, about living in tents and so on.[18]

But Vladimir Chachin, who would in 1960 go on to write a book of heroic stories for young people, disagreed, citing parallels with wartime heroism:

> If your daughter expressed a desire to go to Siberia what would you do? You'd say: "live here for three years and study". But where's the *romantika*? In my opinion, you need to go there immediately, like it was during the war: people will teach them, they'll need minimal instruction, and they'll have their training there.[19]

---

[15] Ibid.
[16] 21/5/56, d.172, l.76.
[17] Ibid. l.80.
[18] Ibid. l.83.
[19] Ibid. l.81.

However, Chachin's romanticism didn't impair his ability to see the downsides. Reporting back to colleagues on poor conditions in Bratsk, even he felt that the "*romantika* of green tents" was a cover for inadequate provision of living quarters.[20] In September of that year, he complained that the paper had not printed his critical article on problems with facilities and a lack of work for new arrivals in the Donbass region, asking "What should we do? Either varnish [лакировать] reality or write the truth without fear."[21]

Chachin's comments illustrated the paper's dilemma. Over the course of 1956 and beyond, journalists reported back to the editorial collective about problems in the regime's *novostroika* projects.[22] But there was a lack of agreement over how the paper should balance negative articles with the needs of a mobilisatory campaign. Having heard a harrowing account of drunkenness and knife fights in Taishet from correspondent Kochergin, Deputy Editor Aleksei Adzhubei failed to respond, and instead commented that the paper needed to cover "the romanticism in the everyday" and suggested introducing a rubric entitled "A hero of our time".[23] Adzhubei also explained that Chachin's critical article had been shelved for fear of antagonising the authorities, arguing that "We are propagandist-agitators. We have a campaign, an appeal, and at such a time we need to write about shortcomings wisely".[24] Replying to the earlier debate about the inadequacy of *romantika*, Adzhubei merely commented that the issue was "complicated", and that the proper balance between preparing young people for what they might encounter and the *romantika* that had sent them there in the first place would be worked out in future articles.[25] But under his editorship, between 1957 and 1959, the balance was firmly weighted in favour of *romantika*, even though the underlying tensions were never satisfactorily resolved.

---

[20] 26/3/56, d.170, l.36.
[21] 3/9/56, d.176, l.21.
[22] 16/4/56, d.171, l.99; 7/5/56, d.172, ll.22-25; 20/8/56, d.175, ll.104-105; Goriunov to TsK VLKSM, 4/12/56, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.821, ll.176-78; 28/4/58, d.225, ll.58-63.
[23] 20/8/56, d.175, ll.104-105, 125.
[24] 3/9/56, d.176, ll.4-5.
[25] 21/5/56, d.172, l.85.

Romantika was one of the keywords of the Khrushchev era, but defining it is not so simple: Vail' and Genis, who devoted a whole section of their book on the Soviet sixties to the term, admitted that definitions of the term were "fuzzy" [расплывчатые].[26] Speaking at an editorial *letuchka* in 1959, Sasha Didusenko described a discussion within the *secretariat* on the meaning of *romantika*, and realised that nobody knew what it meant: "The fact of the matter," he said, "is that we often understand '*romantika*' as anything under the sun".[27] For this reason, Iurii Zerchaninov stated in 1958 that he had "hated the word '*romantika*' from the moment [he] started to work at the paper".[28] Nevertheless, there were certain common characteristics beneath this 'fuzzy' surface. *Romantika* was both a way of seeing the world and also a set of tropes which linked closely to longer-standing dominants within Soviet cultural production. In this chapter, I regard it as a product of the utopianism of the Khrushchev era. It combined a youthful desire for exploration, exemplified by the lure of faraway places, with a heightened sense of connection with the collective, whether that be a group of friends or one's workmates. It borrowed from the past in the form of campfire songs, or the appropriation of symbols from history, but also looked towards the future because of its optimism.

This optimism sat well with existing Socialist Realist norms and led to a process where reports on the Virgin Lands, the Arctic, and the Far East moved out of the realm of news reporting, and into the sphere of aesthetics – in fact, as the previous chapter suggested, a romantic view of the world pervaded Soviet news reporting in general through the Khrushchev era and beyond. This is not to say that everything Soviet journalists printed about the Virgin Lands was fiction, but rather that it became subject to the laws of fictional production[29], which is why the texts printed in this rubric can be profitably compared with literature and cinema (*romantika* can in some senses be considered a variant of

[26] Vail'/Genis, p.127.
[27] 18/5/59, d.247, l.45.
[28] 16/2/58, d.244, l.30.
[29] On this point see Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), xiv. On the novel see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual. Third Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp.210-233. On cinema see Vitalii Troianovskii, 'Novye liudi shestidesiatykh godov' in *Kinematograf ottepeli. Kniga vtoraia*, ed. by Troianovskii (Moscow: Materik, 2002), pp.6-60.

Socialist Realism). By invoking the Socialist Realist dictum that life should be depicted in its "revolutionary development" (e.g. with an eye on the Communist future), journalists were able to avoid uncomfortable questions about the past and present, and to concentrate instead on the future. In this way, they exercised one of the key skills they required to survive in the industry: the ability to look 'deeper' than the isolated fact, and instead find the wider process within which that fact was embedded. Problems were turned into surmountable hurdles, all but certain to be overcome on the road to Communism. This is what made Kim Kostenko's 'Will there be a city of Bratsk?' so daring, since it ventured to go against a decade of rose-tinted dispatches from the River Enisei.[30] In fact, as section three of this chapter will show, Soviet culture's romantic turn, by self-reflexively focusing on models of heroism that borrowed from the periods of the First Five-Year Plan and the Second World War, and by restricting heroism to physical labour, avoided difficult questions, both about the past and also about how models of heroism should adapt to changing social conditions.[31] The well-known *liriki-fiziki* debate of 1959, in which readers debated whether art was necessary in an era of science, provided a first attempt to engage with topical questions, but the paper's "Contemporaries" rubric reflected little of this.[32]

Instead, most articles on Siberia and the Arctic acquired a dreamlike quality: they were infused with the allure of adventure, and the social fantasy of a radiant future. And the autobiographical narratives drafted by young people provided a means for showing those dreams in a way that was in tune with the humanistic ideals of the post-1956 period. A diary of 1959, entitled "The Morning of Construction", one of the first to be published under the "Contemporaries" banner, was praised by science correspondent Mikhail Khvastunov:

---

[30] A. Glazov, K. Kostenko, 'Byt' li gorodu Bratsku' KP 16/10/63, 2.

[31] On the enduring nature of Stalinist tropes see Alexander Prokhorov, 'Inherited Discourse: Stalinist Tropes in Thaw Culture' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2002, esp. pp.104-191.

[32] Susan Costanzo, 'The 1959 Liriki-Fiziki Debate: Going Public With the Private?' in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp.251-268.

> It's a notebook by an eyewitness … a person, it's a reportage from the cutting edge of our battle – and it was done by a participant in that battle, by a person who was on that very Komsomol building site. It's a reportage which will ignite a desire to go there. And it's clear that if one of the waverers [колеблющихся] reads this material – someone who has been sent there but doesn't know whether to go or not – they'll go. This is true Komsomol *romantika* of a great construction site, the *romantika* of 1959.[33]

Thus, autobiographical testimonies lent a certain immediacy to processes of construction that might otherwise have remained abstract. They also, as Khvastunov suggested, seemed to have a human resonance that rendered them all the more effective.

2 Edited Subjects

The appearance of personal testimonies in the Khrushchev-era KP represented a new stage in a long-term fascination with biography and autobiography within Soviet culture. Autobiographical writing disseminated the heroic stories of the Soviet people as a way of consolidating power and promoting the regime's construction tasks. The diary in particular provided a powerful lever for disciplining the self towards a highly normative ideal subject.[34] Party discipline had traditionally been centred around autobiographical practices, with individuals enjoined to produce a public account of their lives and works in order to enter the party or retain their membership. Authors described a personal journey from ignorance to consciousness – from 'darkness to light' – something that became a trope in other narrative contexts, too.[35] It was also a way of recording and preserving memories for posterity. Soviet leaders and cultural figures were convinced that the birth of the Soviet Union represented a new historical epoch, and sought to preserve documents from past and present to provide testimony for future generations.

---

[33] 15/06/59, d.248, l.113. The diary is Andrei Bogachuk, 'Utro stroiki' KP 14/6/59, 3.
[34] Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
[35] Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 1999).

Perhaps the closest parallel to the diaries and autobiographical texts published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in the 1950s and 1960s were the projects of Maksim Gor'kii after his return from exile in 1932. In projects like the "History of Factories and Plants" and the "People of the First and Second Five-Year Plans", Gor'kii aimed to create a collective portrait of a generation, charting the development of the Soviet Union from revolution to industrialisation by employing collective biographical techniques. In many ways, the "Contemporaries" rubric can be considered as a similar kind of 'collective portrait', for it featured the stories of heroic individuals who were performing socially useful labour and presented them as a kind of 'history' of the present (or, the present as history in the making). Indeed, it is little surprise that there were attempts to revive Gor'kii's initiative in the 1950s. A journalist's introduction to one diary published in 1963 made this explicit:

> Sons and grandsons write letters and diaries. These are also living witnesses to the continuing revolution. This is a self-portrait – though still unfinished – of the generation of Komsomol members of the Sixties. We at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* have already published the first outlines of this self-portrait.... Today's edition adds yet more brush strokes [мазков] to the unfinished canvas.[36]

"Contemporaries" narratives in some ways mirrored classic Socialist Realist forms developed under Stalin in the 1930s, from their romantic evocation of faraway places down to the notion of bodily sacrifice (only here represented by giving blood or undergoing a skin graft to save a colleague), but they also sought to move away from those forms.[37] However, in contrast to the portraits produced in the 1930s, where the subjects usually spoke as a collective, the collective portrait of the Khrushchev era was to be formed from an accumulation of *individual* autobiographies.[38]

Journalists spoke of reader-submitted texts, including diaries, as "human documents", which disclosed the genuine "inner world" of their protagonists.[39]

---

[36] Valia Demikhina, 'Tak my zhivem!' KP, 29/10/63, 3.
[37] Chunikhina, 'Libliu tebia'; D. Os'kin, 'Esli v zhilakh krov', a ne voditsa' KP 1/5/64, 3.
[38] E.g. see 'Dnevnik odnoi iacheiki' KP 19/02/30, 4; *Kak my stroili metro. Istorii metro im. L.M. Kagnovich* (Moscow: Izd. 'Istoriia fabrik i zavodov', 1935); *The White Sea Canal*, ed. by Maxim Gorky, L. Auerbach, S. G. Ferin. Trans. Annabel Williams-Ellis (London: John Lane, 1935).
[39] 30/3/59, d.245, l.68.

"You asked me to pluck up courage [собраться с духом] and write everything in detail. So I wrote about everything, I kept nothing secret", wrote tractor driver Valia Chunikhina to her mentor in "I love you, life!", a correspondence published in 1962.[40] Svetlana Serdiuk said of her diary: "I have no secrets there. I simply think about what excites me, and write what seems interesting".[41] Here, the promises of absolute openness offered communion with a transparent and truthful soul – what Lidia Ginzburg described as their "orientation toward authenticity".[42]

That authenticity was to be demonstrated by emphasising their artlessness. The diary of construction-site manager, Valia Demikhina, was composed of "rushed, sometimes scrappy" notes, which were made "in the heat of the moment", not for an audience, but for herself.[43] The posthumously-published diaries of the 25-year old Viktor Golovinskii were introduced with a similar disclaimer:

> It's natural that these diaries don't lay claim to any special fullness in the scope of events; in places they have a personal character, and some of the author's thoughts are scrappy and even, as is characteristic of youth, contentious. But, reading them, we see how rich was his heart, how wide open it was to all of life's joys and labours.[44]

In these diaries, "scrappiness" became a guarantor of "sincerity" and truth. Marianne Liljeström, analysing women's memoirs of the revolution written during this period, similarly noted the belief amongst critics that non-professional authors possessed a "'genuine' interest in remembering and, therefore, they [were] able to tell only the truth. Hence the degree of truth-telling [was] directly connected here to the texts' literary insufficiency."[45]

In KP journalists' debates, there existed an often-naïve belief in the truth-value of autobiographical writing quite at odds with Ginzburg's comments about

---

[40] Valia Chunikhina, 'Ia liubliu tebia, zhizn'!', KP 16/11/62.
[41] Svetlana Serdiuk, 'Dariu liudiam sad', KP 30/6/63.
[42] Lidya Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*. Trans. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p.6.
[43] Demikhina, 'Tak my zhivem!'
[44] Viktor Golovinskii, 'Stranitsy odnoi zhizni' KP, 29/3/59, 3.
[45] Marianne Liljeström, 'Monitored Selves: Soviet Women's Autobiographical Texts in the Khrushchev Era', in *Women in the Khrushchev Era,* ed. by Melanie Ilic, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), p.135.

its inherent unreliability.[46] Journalists at KP enthusiastically endorsed the work of 'non-staff' authors, and equated their work with simple, unpretentious, and true – something more direct and more authentic than journalists' own writing. Vitalii Ganiushkin, a correspondent in the Student Youth Department, said of Golovinskii's diary: "It would be one thing if it had been written by a journalist – but it wouldn't have been as effective as the way a person writes about himself and about his path in life. [...] It's believable because it's written sincerely".[47]

Unlike Aleksei Stakhanov and other exemplary heroes of the 1930s, the young people who came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s – in the paper's diaries and in literature more widely – were not all-powerful *bogatyry*, but shy, unassuming, vulnerable and, above all, typical. Liana Danilenko was painted as "our contemporary, a rank-and-file Komsomol member, and a remarkable person".[48] Likewise, Viktor Golovinskii was an

> ordinary young person, educated in the spirit and the meaning of our Soviet reality. [...] Amongst our Soviet youth there are many people like Viktor Golovinskii. It is they who rise high beyond the clouds in jet-planes, steer ships through the storm, construct towns, and build new highways. For them, life is intense and beautiful.[49]

In Chapters 1 and 2 we saw how reporting of the negative aspects of Soviet life conflicted with the demand that the press should report on the "typical". Heroes like Danilenko and Golovinskii were both 'typical' and 'extraordinary'. Anybody could become like them – that was the point of printing their diaries and letters – but they remained atypical: "lighthouses", to use a term fashionable at the time.[50]

To make such figures truly capable of emulation, journalists sought to contrast the modest outer appearance of an individual to their great deeds. In his introduction, Dnepropetrovsk correspondent Aleksandr Murzin recounted having asked Danilenko to explain her diary: "Liana became embarrassed – she

---

[46] Ginzburg, p.6.
[47] 30/3/59, d.245, ll.68-70 [emphasis added].
[48] Liana Danilenko, 'Ia poliubliu tebia, Sibir'!' KP 8/3/61, 3-4.
[49] Golovinskii, 'Stranitsy'.
[50] See also Boris Pankin's words on the typicality of Otar Ioseliani's diary/testimony: 24/2/64, d.361, l.72.

started to talk about how and when it all began, but then got flustered [растерилась]."[51] A year later Murzin wrote about a young field-doctor, the "frail" Rita Vlasova, and asked "How did you not take fright, not leave, and yet work for more than a year at the end of the earth [на краю земли], and overcome everything: distance, separation, discomfort, pangs [червь] of doubt in yourself, in your strengths, in your abilities?[52] Danilenko's unprepossessing stature and modest demeanour, and Vlasova's physical weakness were apparently no impediment to the accomplishment of great feats.

Although journalists took care to paint these individuals as ordinary and otherwise remarkable, they were still exemplars. Kristin Roth-Ey has pointed out how Soviet television sought to replace the Stalinist *kul't lichnosti* with images of ordinary *lichnosti*. But the idea of *lichnost'* was far from inclusive: "A *lichnost'* was someone worth emulating, a person with something to teach, a cultural authority".[53] The same was true in the press. In order to have their heroes project cultural authority, journalists corrected and "prepared" autobiographical documents before publication. It is clear that this process went far beyond mere editing, to encompass rewriting entire sections of text.[54] Such practices were thus reminiscent of the collective autobiographical projects of the 1930s, where workers' contributions were polished by professional writers to bring them up to standard.[55]

There did, in fact, exist a moral code for the editing of reader material. Elena Bruskova, one of the paper's roving correspondents, furiously criticised colleagues for the way in which they had misrepresented the content of a reader's letter, saying that "[letters] should be grammatical in a literary sense, appropriate for the press, and nothing more", while a 1962 article in *Sovetskaia*

---

[51] Danilenko, 'Ia poliubila'.
[52] Rita Vlasova, 'Adres schast'e, Sever!' KP 3/10/62, 1, 3.
[53] Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*: *How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.273.
[54] 13/3/61, d.298, l.41, 8/10/62, d.326, l.81.
[55] Josette Bouvard, 'L'injonction autobiographique dans les années 1930. G.A. Medynskij et l'histoire du métro de Moscou' *Cahiers du Monde russe* 50/1 (2009), 69-92; Katerina Clark, ''The History of the Factories' as a Factory of History: A Case Study on the Role of Soviet Literature in Subject Formation', in *Autobigraphical Practices in Russia - Autobiographische Praktiken in Russland*, ed. by Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2004), pp.251–78.

pechat' spoke out against the practice of re-writing.[56] However, processes of editing material written by non-professionals were institutionalised: sixty per cent of the paper's stories had to be sourced from outside the paper's staff, so for every two stories written by the journalist themselves, at least three had to be re-written 'for' authors (the so-called '60-40 rule'), or else part of their salary was docked.[57]

But some journalists viewed this process of editing and correcting as a service to the original authors. Writing about the 60-40 rule, special correspondent Vera Benderova claimed: "They have something to say, experienced people. But not everybody has the ability to write, is able to accommodate a life's experience to the severe framework of a newspaper article".[58] Speaking about the "Contemporaries" rubric, science correspondent A. Biriukov explained to his colleagues the benefits of such editing:

> [Diarists] can't always explain or talk in bombastic words about why they went. They went, which means that they've got conviction. That means that we certainly need to work with these people's diaries, to help them so that any stupidities [глупости] are cleaned up, so that they're as cogent as they ought to be. We should support these authors because they are real heroes and for that we should sing their praises. That doesn't mean that illegibility is permissible.[59]

The duty of the journalist before the diary-writer consisted not in preserving original words and thoughts, but in editing and re-drafting, so that "stupidities" were eliminated. Through correction, journalists would "help" and "support" diary-writers (who had already proved their heroism by going to distant climes) by making them appear to be as heroic as they always-already were. These journalist-editors were not, then, sensitive gatekeepers of a sacred original text, but sculptors of the Soviet contemporary.

This sculpting could acquire substantial proportions. Aleksandr Murzin rewrote nearly 80 per cent of Liana Danilenko's diary, leading one journalist to

---

[56] 13/1/58, d.219, ll.99-102; E. Kamenetskii, '"Orginapu" - net!' SP 4 (1962), 22–25.
[57] Vladimir Pozner, *Parting With Illusions* (London: Grafton Books, 1990), 201; Ilya Gerol, Geoffrey Molyneux, *The Manipulators: Inside the Soviet Media* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1988), pp.58-69.
[58] Vera Benderova, 'Sol' chuzhikh slez', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5*, ed. by B. S. Burkov and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), p.327.
[59] 30/9/63, d.349, l.15'a' (unnumbered).

denounce “fabrications”, but Editor-in-Chief Iurii Voronov, while considering 80 per cent excessive, insisted that Murzin “prepared, not wrote” the diary, praised it for being “sincere”, and reported that one of the country’s most famous journalists, Iurii Zhukov, had called the paper to offer his congratulations.[60] Autobiographical testimonies merely needed to possess a 'sense' of the individual to be successful. Boris Pankin said of one text “He expressed himself [in his diary]. Having read it, we made corrections. But we understand this person's feelings".[61]

For such articles to be effective, the role of journalist as editor needed to be kept under wraps. When the paper’s “preparation” of a diary was mentioned, Iurii Zerchaninov criticised the paper's candour: “That's an editorial secret,” he argued.[62] However, one reader saw editorial intervention in positive terms: upon reading the diary of Zoia Abramova, he pleaded: “Send Zoia an experienced writer who would, God willing, not suppress her authority, but the opposite: would raise it, inspire it, and support it.”[63] And some ‘contemporaries’ were perfectly capable of penning legends of their own. Almost two years after her diary appeared in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, the name of Liana Danilenko, the “librarian from a lonely Siberian village”, appeared in the magazine *Sibirskie ogni* as Bratsk GES gave its first current – only this time Danilenko wasn't the subject of the breathless report, but its author.[64] Several years later, Vika Sagalov praised the testimony of Al'bert Mukhitdinov, entitled “Key to the Arctic”, for its literary qualities before pausing to lament: “I found out later that [the author] is a professional journalist. It would have been better if we presented him as such".[65] But such facts were another “editorial secret”.

For other ‘contemporaries’, the practice of ‘public-private’ diary-writing was a subjectivising mechanism *par excellence* – and editing was at the heart of it. Citing the plentiful images of dismemberment in Stalinist canonical works,

---

[60] 8/10/62, d.326, ll.70-71, 118-120.
[61] 24/2/64, d.361, l.72.
[62] 13/3/61, d.291, l.41. See also Sergei Ivanov, ‘Nash poezd idet dal’she’ KP, 27/11/57, 2, “prepared for the press” by A. Vinogradov.
[63] ‘Stenogramma vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo seminara: ‘Zhurnalist i trebovaniia zhizni”, 23/6/64, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.244, l.37.
[64] Vail'/Genis, p.83.
[65] 12/12/67, d.457, l.2.

Eric Naiman has claimed that "[t]he ideal Stalinist subject [...] was an abridged man, not a *sokrovennyi* [≈ private] but a *sokrashchennyi* [abridged] *chelovek*".[66] In a similar way (though with less physically crippling results) we might say that journalists produced a *redaktirovannyi chelovek*, an edited person, and that this was one of the myriad ways of being in the world created by the power of the Soviet state.

II

Many of the "editorial secrets" referred to by Zerchaninov perished in a 2006 fire in KP's archive. Without access to the original texts, it is impossible to discern how they were edited and thus such texts might seem to be of limited use to historians. Recent work on Soviet subjectivity has, after all, illustrated the benefits of using original documents to interrogate individuals' inner worlds via close textual analysis.[67] However, the question of subjectivity is not only a question of what subjects 'really' thought, but also about the processes and practices through which authors were constituted as authors and as subjects.[68] Articles bore the name of their original authors and articles ostensibly presented their thoughts. These texts, then, do not show us the process of an individual attempting to adopt a language as his/her own, as in Hellbeck, but instead ask the time-honoured question «кто кого?»: who (is writing) whom? As one young diarist of the 1960s asked in her own private diary: "Am I writing or am I being written?"[69] This process is reminiscent of what Gor'kii wrote to Iurii Tynianov, who had written a biographical novel about the playwright

[66] Eric Naiman, 'On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars Who Make Them' *Russian Review* 60 (July 2001), 314. This argument would later be taken up with great cogency by Lilya Kaganovsky in *How the Soviet Man Was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity Under Stalin* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008)

[67] See Hellbeck, *Revolution*; Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[68] See Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone, 'Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective', *Slavic Review* 67/4 (Winter 2008): 967-968 on this point. The key text in this regard is Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp.101–20.

[69] Irina Savkina, ''Am I Writing or Am I Being Written?': A Diary of a Young Soviet Woman (1968-1970)', in *Real Stories, Imagined Realities: Fictionality and Non-Fictionality in Literary Constructs and Historical Contexts*, ed. by Markku Lehtmäki, Simo Leisti and Marja Rytkönen (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2007), pp.289–303.

Aleksandr Griboedov: "Griboedov is remarkable, although I didn't expect to see him like this. But you showed him so convincingly that he must have been thus. And if he wasn't, he will be now."[70]

Analysing texts in terms of their biographical progression can deliver valuable insights into the ideological mechanisms and presuppositions underpinning a society, since they uncover the rites of passage that a particular society finds significant.[71] The texts featured in the "Contemporaries" rubric rigidly followed a single biographical model, through which journalists sought to render authors' lives culturally legible. The narratives in question enacted a journey to consciousness: they were a kind of *Bildungsroman*, beginning with their protagonists on the brink of a breakthrough, following them to a triumphant conclusion where they found maturity, happiness, and consciousness.[72]

The journey between these two points was not a steady progression, but a great symbolic leap – or, in fact, two leaps. The first of these was exemplified by the decision to leave home, which set the narrative into motion, and was often accompanied by a series of breathless exclamations: "The Trans-Siberian! The Mainline! I'm going!"; "Great, I'm going to Bratsk!"; "I'm going! I'm going!"[73] The decision not only marked the beginning of the narrative, but set the author's journey into motion. One diarist wrote "I arrived at Chita on August 12 at half past five," in much the same way as if she was recording the exact place and time of her birth. And indeed, this was the moment when a new page of history was being written.[74] Sometimes this decision came after a bout of soul-searching; more often, the decision was instantaneous – almost as if it had

[70] Quoted in Angela Brintlinger, *Writing a Usable Past: Russian Literary Culture, 1917-1937* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), p.16.
[71] In this regard there is considerable merit in Katerina Clark's reading of the Soviet novel as 'ritual' in *The Soviet Novel*.
[72] The Bildungsroman is a coming-of-age narrative which enacts the protagonist's journey towards maturity. See Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000). Katerina Clark has suggested that, while sharing aspects of the Bildungsroman form, the Soviet novel was not a Bildungsroman because the "hero's progress is never individual nor self-valuable" (*Soviet Novel*, pp.16-17). However, this chapter suggests that this renunciation of the self was problematic by the 1960s.
[73] Danilenko, 'Ia poliubliu'; Tadeush Skibinskii, 'Dogoniaite nas, poezda', KP 26/9/63, 2-3; Ivanov, 'Nash poezd'; Tamara Prokopenko, 'Postigaia azbuka truda', KP 17/9/63, 1-2.
[74] Chunikhina, 'Ia lubliu '.

required no thought whatsoever, suggesting that heroism was always-already *within* the hero – a character trait that merely needed to be awakened.

Sometimes, friends or family members tried to warn protagonists against going to the wilds of the country, but were overruled. This speaks of the individualism and iron will of contemporaries, and their choice of a public over a private identity. Valentina Demikhina recalled how her mother left in tears after seeing her daughter's inhospitable living conditions.[75] Liana Danilenko wondered how to persuade her sick mother to allow her to go to Siberia, but wrote that if she went, she would never be able to forgive herself for her "callousness" [бездушность]. Despite this, she overrode her mother's objections, writing defiantly: "No, I won't rethink!".[76] Her mother was not mentioned again. This clearly displayed a commitment to public values over the trifles of private life, but it could also make authors seem wilful – perhaps even cruel.[77] Such behaviour thus sat uneasily with the more 'sincere' notion of human relations being put forward by the intelligentsia during the Thaw: Danilenko was willing to give a "piece of her heart" to the locals, but such sentiments were notably absent when it came to her own family.

At this point, two main paths were available. Either, there was a more-or-less uninterrupted narrative journey towards productive and fulfilling work (which tended to lack dramatic tension) or, much more frequently, a bout of soul searching and even crisis: this was the second great narrative leap. Tadeusz Skibinskii, a twenty-year-old from Mogilev in Belarus, who journeyed to Bratsk to lay rails, wrote that he had "started to regret ever coming to Siberia". Liana Danilenko, faced with the fact that "Siberians [had] turned out to be not as romantic as they were in [her] imagination" confessed: "Right now I hate myself completely". Her solution: "I need to create a cast-iron timetable for myself and keep to it with Tolstoi-like diligence".[78]

Doubts were to be assuaged through discipline and self-criticism. Diarists frequently upbraided themselves. "[...] I'm a gossip. I need to reproach myself

[75] Demikhina, 'Tak my zhivem'.
[76] Dalinenko, 'Ia poliubila'.
[77] On this point see Liljeström, p.137.
[78] Danilenko, 'Ia poliubila'.

for that. I don't read many books, I don't embroider, I don't go anywhere – not even to the cinema,"[79] wrote Valia Chunikhina, and readers seemed to respond in kind: replying to Valia, Lialia from Sochi confessed to the crime of having borrowed a friend's book and not returned it.[80] This tendency could be seen most clearly in the diary of Viktor Golovinskii, in which he seemed to implore himself to improve in almost every entry. "My main shortcoming is that I waste my time on petty things,"[81] he wrote, and elsewhere he drafted a set of maxims that could have come out of Chernyshevskii's *What is to be Done?*

> (1) Renounce any activity that deflects me from concerted work
> (2) Watch myself [Следить за собой]. Not to allow myself the familiar tone with which I speak at the *gorkom*, at rehearsals, at the paper. Be attentive to people.
> (3) For the education of the will – a firm regime [Для воспитания воли – твердый режим].
> (4) Write my diary every other day.[82]

However, Golovinskii also saw such introspection as unhealthy: "A man should not live by his thoughts and feelings alone. A man must remain a man," he said.[83] Others derided intellectual reflection outright: Anatolii Shelkopliasov, writing to Valia Chunikhina, whose correspondence had been published in November 1962, talked of how his intellectual abilities "almost ruined [his] life" because they offered him a "clean" job [чистенькая работа]. But he claims to have been "oppressed by the feeling of being of little use, and ashamed by [his] hands, which were soft and delicate – not like a man's hands" [не по-мужски мягких, нежных].[84] Shelkopliasov eventually became a geologist-scout in the Arctic. Thought was not only unhealthy but emasculating: only by acting, making a physical mark on the world (and, in turn, by being physically marked by it) could these diarists prove their worthiness.[85]

---

[79] Chunikhina, 'Ia liubliu'.
[80] 'My liubim zhizn'!', KP 26/12/62, 2.
[81] Golovinskii, 'Stranitsy'.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] 'My liubim', 2.
[85] See, for example, the poem 'Byl li ty molodym', where "squeeze[ing] blisters by the palmful" becomes a marker of true youthfulness (KP, 6/5/59). In the next section, we will see how such masculine qualities conflicted with the more rarefied values of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods.

If labour was a path to maturity and masculinity, it also offered a route to community. Filmmaker Otar Ioseliani wrote in elevated tones about his relationship with colleagues: "My work now, and this blast-furnace today will … become memories, maybe some of the very best, and these comrades will be with me forever".[86] He later spoke of the fact that "the most beautiful, inspiring, and even touching minutes are after work – the minutes of recognition of what you've done, of pride". Colleagues hearts' are "full of tenderness and care for one another". He looks "tenderly and lovingly" at a colleague, and speaks of a "unity of spilled sweat" [единство пролитого рота]. A similar theme of collective belonging was visible in the diary of Tadeusz Skibinskii, who overcame his regrets about coming to Siberia:

> You're looking for *romantika*? Here it is before your very eyes. You're looking for romantics? Here they are, sixty odd people. They've worked ten hours today and they're going to work another ten. You won't hear anyone complain that they're tired, or that they're sorry they came to Siberia.
>
> I became awfully ashamed. "An hour ago you said you were sorry you came to Siberia," a voice opposite said. "No, I'm not sorry," replied another voice. "Are you sorry you came?" "No, I'm not sorry," I said loudly. "Z*emliak*, who are you talking to?" said Nina. "To you, Nina ... to myself, to everybody!" "I understand," she proffered, amazed.[87]

"To you [...] to myself, to everybody": the *podvig* represented the moment when individual loneliness and self-doubt gave way to the discovery of an authentic community of individuals. Through the *podvig*, a potentially subversive individualism was converted into a narrative of collective action. Personal history and national history were concentrated into a single instant and a single space: individuals were not just building a dam, or a new house, but history itself. Almost inevitably, given the extreme labour-centricity of the Soviet project, the construction site was the place where the processes of history were "made flesh" – where physical space was shown to be the product of human processes.

---

[86] Ioseliani, 'Geroi, vy riadom so mnoi', KP 21/2/64, 2-4.

[87] Skibinskii, 'Dogoniaite', 3. See also examples in Al'bert Miftakhutdinov, 'Kliuch ot zapoliaria', KP 30/11/67, 2.

It was also the place where young people reached consciousness and blended in with the collective: from this point, diarists and letter-writers proclaimed their self-understanding, or personal happiness, thus casting the narrative as one of individual transformation. There was nothing inherently problematic about this: after all, Communism promised individual fulfilment. But it is also necessary to ask how these individual transformations fit in with the wider social and historical process in which they were embedded. What part did the contemporary hero play in these processes: were they to be exemplars to be emulated by anybody, or exceptional figures, proof of what *could* be achieved, but not necessarily what *should* be achieved?

3 Spaces and Things

Movement was at the heart of the "Contemporaries" rubric: from urban to rural, centre to periphery, from comfort to struggle. It seemed that only in labour and in estrangement from the luxury and temptations of city life could individuals find fulfilment. But, given that Soviet society was ostensibly moving towards a Communist society based on increased satisfaction of consumer desires, a tension emerged between the values of 'Contemporaries' and those projected by the regime. Moreover, behind the vivid spatial descriptions of nature and travel, a temporal narrative of historical continuity and progress was more difficult to produce. Alongside the narrative of personal fulfilment and exploration, another narrative of supressed history and social problems was left unspoken.

The previous section illustrated how narrative time in the "Contemporaries" rubric was synonymous with biographical time. This was, of course, an inevitable consequence of their autobiographical focus. However, what is striking is the remoteness of historical concerns – how even the most basic conceptions of *historical* time, of past and future and their relation to the present, were often absent. Again, this was partly down to the genre: individuals tend to talk about themselves in diaries and letters. However, given

the fact that journalists were actively intervening in redrafting texts, this absence is nevertheless surprising.

The absence of temporal anchors can be partly attributed to the fact that the paper's autobiographical texts appeared at a time of crisis. The Secret Speech tore a hole in the narrative of historical progress that the regime had hitherto put forward. On the evidence of the "Contemporaries" rubric, it seems that journalists at KP were only able to provide a new narrative at the expense of passing over aspects of the past in silence. The only diary in the series to mention the Terror, published in 1964 and written by Andrei Chukhno, reflected this.[88] Rather than a personal testimony, it was a history of the Lighthouse *kolkhoz* from the 1920s through to the 1960s, which read more like a chronicle than a diary. When it touched on the Terror, the neutral tone was disconcerting: having been arrested after a false denunciation in 1937, all Chukhno wrote was that: "In November [1938], thirteen months after my arrest, I returned to my job. Lapa, Kozachok and Kondratenko never returned". And with those terse words, a line was drawn under the affair.

Katerina Clark has written of a "leapfrog" manoeuvre where the historical narrative jumped from revolution and Civil War to Five-Year Plan to Great Patriotic War, while omitting difficult-to-explain episodes such as NEP, the Terror, and the repressions of post-war Stalinism.[89] This was certainly true of KP, which largely omitted to mention the Terror and, when it did, argued that, while crimes were committed under Stalin, heroic feats and romanticism were far more prevalent.[90] Diaries appeared from figures like Sergei Chekmarev, a poet and activist who died in 1933, and Valentin Mal'tsev, an eighteen year-old whose letters from the siege of Leningrad were serialised over several days.[91] Both publications brought their authors posthumous fame, suggested a way of

---

[88] Andrei Chukhno, 'Sveti, Maiak!', KP 4/8/64, 1, 2.
[89] Katerina Clark, 'Changing Historical Paradigms in Soviet Culture' in *Late Soviet Culture from Perestroika to Novostroika*, ed. by Thomas Lahusen, Gene Kuperman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p.298.
[90] E.g. see Boris Pankin, 'My – v lagere dobra', KP 27/11/63, 2. For editorial discussion of this article see 2/12/63, d.350, ll.4, 11, 16-21.
[91] Sergei Chekmarev, 'Na peredem krae', KP 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14/9/56; Valentin Maltsev, 'Zhivym zhit' na zemle', KP 15-20/6/58.

linking the past with the present, and invited comparisons with the autobiographical efforts of 'contemporaries'.

Characteristic of this tendency was the editorial introduction to Valia Demikhina's diary:

> … After our fathers and grandfathers there still remain cities on the map, factories, canals, and scientific discoveries, statues to heroes and the fraternal graves of the unknown soldiers of Communism.
>
> And memoirs, diaries and letters still remain, too. Self-portraits of Korcharginites and the Young Guard … Sons and grandsons want to be worthy of the glory of their fathers and grandfathers; sons and daughters want their "Zimnii" and their "Magnitka". Today, there are Komsomol construction projects, chemicals, the fight for the harvest, the storming of space. And sons and grandsons are writing letters and diaries. They are also living witnesses of the continuing revolution. These are, though incomplete, a self-portrait of the Komsomol generation of the 1960s.[92]

But despite these appeals to a pristine, heroic history, it was space, not time, that was asked to bear the weight of meaning. Under Stalin, Moscow was the symbolic and literal centre of the nation; power radiated outwards from the Kremlin to the periphery.[93] We can illustrate this process by comparing the amount of column space that was devoted to different locations in the late-Stalin and Khrushchev periods. As Figure 2 (page 187) shows, the vast majority of material printed in the last years of Stalinism was concerned with locales urban or European – and overwhelmingly with affairs in Moscow. However, after 1956, this skewing of the paper's geography became a matter for debate. Journalists found it a worrying sign that KP spoke so little on the country's outlying areas and it was considered unacceptable to allow a single week to go by without an article on Siberia or the Virgin Lands.[94] Over time, there emerged an increased provision of information from 'exotic' locales where the paper did

---

[92] Demikhina, 'Tak my zhivem'. See also Iurii Zhukov's *People of the 30s*, which attempted to draw a line between the constructors of Komsomol'sk-na-Amure and Magnitogorsk in the past, and the builders of Bratsk and the conquerors of the Virgin Lands in the present day. See Iurii Zhukov, *Liudi 30-x godov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Sovetskaia Rossiia", 1966). The book was printed before Khrushchev's ouster.

[93] See the essays in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. by Evgeny Dobrenko, Eric Naiman (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003).

[94] See, for example, 20/8/56, d.175, ll.100-101; 2/12/57, d.298, ll.17-18; 16/12/57, d.198, l.60; 2/6/58, d.227, ll.20, 28, 30; 18/5/59, d.247, l.56.

not have correspondents, such as short *faits divers* on the construction of a factory, or a new hydro-electric power plant.

By 1960, the paper's geography had shifted eastwards (Figure 3, page 188). The vast majority of column inches devoted to the Soviet periphery came from longer items: sketches, reportages, so-called 'documentary narratives' – and, of course, from readers' diaries, letters, and notebooks – all devoted to 'selling' the natural wonders of the Soviet wilderness to urbanised readers. Such articles painted the periphery as purer and more authentic than the centre. Relations of space were cast as relations of quality; the distance travelled from civilisation signified the size of one's soul. KP both reflected and encouraged this overturning of the Moscow-centric hierarchy established under Stalin. Though Moscow undoubtedly remained the symbolic centre – "The Stars of the Kremlin are the Planet's Lighthouse" proclaimed one headline[95] – it also frequently subverted this Moscow-centrism by printing articles about the troublesome and subversive behaviour of Muscovites. Moscow was therefore caught between two diametrically opposed roles: it was the political centre – and seemingly a den of vice.

A letter from a reader in Amur, published in 1956 in the youth monthly *Iunost'*, contended:

> This town is interesting because it's mostly working people living in it, you never see idlers; in Moscow on an ordinary working day I saw people hanging around idly [прадно-шатающихся] on the street – there's none of that here.[96]

This equation of Moscow with idleness and debauchery became so widespread that at the Twenty-Second Party Congress of 1961 Aleksandr Tvardovskii, the editor of *Novyi mir,* felt compelled to speak out against the denigration of the nation's capital:

> [...] the conception of Moscow as a kind of Babylon, full of all sorts of temptations and supreme vanities, and as the antithesis, as it were, to the righteous life seems to me hardly valid. As though Moscow were not the centre of the country's political and cultural life, were not one of the most important sectors of our

[95] 'Zvezdy Kremlia – maiak planety', KP 3/9/63, 3.
[96] 'Pervye pis'ma', *Iunost'* 11 (November 1956), 69.

> construction, as though it did not provide wonderful and extremely rich material for studying life in all its most intricate interweavings.[97]

Despite this apparent inversion of the cultural significations of centre and periphery, the reversal of symbolic roles was far from total. The residents of faraway towns seemed to require assistance of visitors from the centre, and were often in thrall to superstition, or lacking in culture. Moreover, Moscow and the cities still retained their unique power to produce heroes – a power which was denied, for the most part, to the periphery. For a hero to originate from the periphery (and, what's more, to stay there) was a rare occurrence: the city, it seems, was the place where heroes came from; the periphery was the place in which they could emerge.

This possibility of 'emerging' was the real attraction. The paper painted the periphery as a space of truth, but also enjoyment and self-actualisation; readers of KP were invited to enjoy Soviet space, with Siberia, especially, depicted as a land of natural wonders, beauty – and freedom.[98] In the Soviet novel, the periphery functioned as a kind of adventure space freed from the weight of the past. The letters, diaries and testimonies of the 1950s and 1960s explicitly played on the joys of sleeping under the stars, of communing with nature, of overcoming hardship and 'finding' oneself; Kazakhstan, the Arctic, and Siberia – in short, anywhere "far from Moscow" – were the stages upon which a personal journey was played out.

Rather than redeeming the past, the Soviet wilderness provided an opportunity for individuals to fulfil their own dreams in the present. The 'Contemporaries' narratives of the 1950s and 1960s had something in common with the films of the period, in which historical events were deprived of their symbolic significance and instead represented "a plateau of experience that displays the highest manifestations of a human self, a realm of ultimate being".[99] But perhaps this phenomenon extended beyond historical narratives – perhaps

---

[97] *Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Charlotte Saikowski, Leo Gruliow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p.189.

[98] E.g. 'Pod ogniami poliarnogo siianiia', KP 5/12/59, 4; Clark, *Soviet Novel*, pp.224-233.

[99] Petre Petrov, 'The Freeze of Historicity in Thaw Cinema', *Kinokultura* 8 (April 2005) <http://www.kinokultura.com/articles.apr05-petrov.html> [Accessed: 10/7/2011]

it was a tendency of this period not just to look for times of heightened intensity, but also spaces: Siberia merely literalised this tendency. Yuri Slezkine describes the process in this way:

> [D]ozens of orphaned fictional youngsters stampeded out of the soulless old capitals to a land where the snow never melted and where men kept their word. Leaving behind their dead-end jobs, clinging girlfriends, and shattered ideals, the new heroes of the 1950s and '60s followed the "Cheliuskintsy" to Siberia – only now they "tempered" themselves by submitting to it, not by taming it. If the mechanised future was a fraud, then the remaining wilderness represented purity and authenticity. Siberia was a stern mentor ("The tundra does not like the weak"), but its truth was timeless.[100]

"Timeless" is the operative word, for it signified an escape from history into an endless present. Historical time seemed to be frozen, petrified – and space, while appearing to provide a refuge, was actually implicated in the process. For if Magnitka and Turksib were *lieux de memoire*, Magadan and Taishet – where a number of diaries were set – were no less so.[101] Siberia could only be a virgin field in the world of rhetoric: it was too pock-marked with the detritus of a brutal past to be so in reality.[102]

For younger journalists, this proved a shock. Vsevolod Bogdanov remembered being criticised by an older journalist for calling the city of Severodvinsk a "dream city" when, in fact, it was the centre of the Gulag network:

> I was really upset. I thought that Severodvinsk truly was a romantic city of youth, with white nights and enormous industrial enterprises. But someone from another generation remembered something else. For the first time, I felt the mismatch between what I saw and immediately felt, and the underlying principles of what had happened in the past.[103]

While journalistic rhetoric sought to emphasise a new beginning, in reality it proved difficult to start the page afresh. Many of Khrushchev's showpiece

---

[100] Yuri Slezkine, Galya Diment, 'Introduction', in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, ed. by Diment & Slezkine (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p.6.
[101] Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire. 3 vols.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997)
[102] Vail'/Genis, p.82.
[103] V. Bogdanov, ''Ia chelovek postoianno vlubliennyi ...' ', *Zhurnalist*, 2 (2004), 66. [Originally quoted in Natalia Roudakova, 'From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of Their Public After Socialism' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 2007, pp.86-87, translation modified].

projects (the Virgin Lands campaign, Bratsk GES) were spaces where the brutal 'internal colonisation' of the Stalin Era was beginning to unravel, with chaotic and unexpected results.[104]

Journalists were more than aware of this process. P.L. Godlevskii, a correspondent who had just returned from *komandirovka* to Bratsk GES reported back to colleagues about the negative consequences of the mingling of camp labour, 'free' (ex-convict) labour, and young enthusiasts from the cities (Bratsk was in the vicinity of five large camps). According to Godlevskii, construction sites like Bratsk GES, were problematically split into distinct 'zones' which housed 'criminal' and 'civilian' elements respectively.[105] But, as he told his colleagues, "there's no need to write about that in the newspaper" – a recommendation that the newspaper faithfully observed.[106] As KP journalist Inna Rudenko recalled in 2003:

> My romantic elation clearly prevented me from seeing life in its real, contradictory complexity. That is, I saw – I knew, for example, how many prisoners, how many newly-released political prisoners there were on the construction sites of Communism – but to write about it? The thought never came into my head.[107]

As long as these tensions stayed out of the newspaper, it may seem that journalists had nothing to worry about. However, by emphasising the biographical over the historical, narratives lost sight of the official structures of Party and Komsomol, and instead spoke of an abstract collective. Only in the very final lines of Tadeusz Skibinskii's diary did he decide to join the Komsomol, leading one member of the editorial team to comment incredulously that he had needed two years to come to that realisation.[108] Though the activities of a handful of diarists were intertwined with the work of the Komsomol, to the

---

[104] The application of notions of (internal) colonisation to Soviet space is most forcefully made in Kate Brown, 'Out of Solitary Confinement: The History of the Gulag' *Kritika* 8/1 (Winter 2007): 67-103 and taken up in Stephen Lovell's discussion of centre/periphery models in *The Shadow of War*: *Russia and the USSR, 1941 to the Present* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), Chapter 6. See also Aleksandr Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

[105] 28/4/58, d.225, l.63.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Inna Rudenko, 'Nado pomnit', chto est' liudi, kotorye luchshe tebia', in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma-press, 2003), p.760.

[108] 30/9/63, d.349, ll.8-9.

majority of authors, they seemed almost irrelevant. Even in journalists' introductions to articles, where protagonists' work was placed in the heroic lineage of previous mass actions, it appears that these were performed for personal satisfaction and, at best, in order to build Communism – not for the Communist Party or Komsomol. This might appear to be a purely semantic distinction – after all, the building of Communism was the Party's *raison d'être* – but it illustrates a certain hollowing out of the Party's authority. Whilst belief in Communism as a goal remained active, this no longer needed to flow through the Party. Instead, it travelled through the individual, or through a collective that was only tenuously linked to official structures.

II

At a *letuchka* in January 1960, Sof'ia Bol'shakova spoke of how material plenty was not on its own a guarantee of Communism:

> In a number of countries – Sweden, America, they've already reached such a level of production of material goods that in certain circumstances it would be possible to talk about prosperity in every home. But of course, even if a social revolution occurred in these countries, we couldn't talk about communism existing, for communism is, above all, communist consciousness.[109]

Sweden was on the agenda once more in June, as KP's journalists discussed an article on a crisis amongst the youth of Sweden, entitled "The Fruits of a Free Education".[110] Such articles were common: they allowed the paper to turn the spotlight on a perceived moral crisis in the West, while deflecting attention from journalists' own sense of malaise. Kira Nikiforova, the Deputy Head of the Department of Letters, argued that Soviet citizens differed from their western counterparts in terms of moral outlook:

> **Nikiforova:** Everybody who has been abroad has come across the fact that young people from capitalist countries, who are wonderful on the outside, bring about a feeling of sympathy … very often they're somehow without aspirations, without ideas.
> **Khvastunov:** Sweets without fillings ... [Конфетки без начинки]

[109] 18/1/60, d.268, l.153.
[110] M. Arkad'ev, 'Plody 'svobodnogo vospitaniia'' KP 12/6/60, 4.

> **Nikiforova:** If you like, sweets without fillings.[111]

Thus, it was through moral characteristics, exemplified by the parade of unstinting, dedicated heroes in the 'Contemporaries' rubric, that Soviet superiority was to be demonstrated.

However, there remained confusion as to the meaning of Communism. At the January 1960 *letuchka*, Bol'shakova criticised the simplistic view of Communism that many citizens possessed:

> How do our people imagine communism? Communism is when there will be lots of everything; when you don't need to work and everything will be available, and the quicker products are available, the quicker communism will exist – that's how plainly some people understand it.[112]

But this was a misconception propagated by the country's leaders: the very next year, Khrushchev, in his report to the Twenty-Second Party Congress, announced that "the cup of Communism is the cup of abundance, and it must always be full to the brim".[113] At the very same Congress, a new party programme was approved which promised that the Soviet Union would be built ("in the main") by 1980.[114]

However, the regime's focus on the material aspects of communism invited problems. Competition with the West's superior material wealth invited unwanted comparisons. Many Soviet tourists to Eastern Europe came home laden with as many items as they could carry – sometimes even selling their own possessions to buy more goods.[115] Judged by one of the Soviet regime's most important yardsticks, the apparently less-developed 'periphery' of Eastern Europe was, in reality, somewhat more advanced than its Soviet centre. This development not only threatened to place the Soviet Union on a collision course with the world's most advanced producers of such trinkets but also to

---

[111] 13/6/60, d.273, l.87.
[112] 18/1/60, d.268, ll.127-128.
[113] N.S. Khrushchev, 'On the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Report at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, October 18, 1961' in *Current Soviet Policies IV*, p.89.
[114] 'The Party Program' in Ibid., p.15.
[115] Anne E. Gorsuch, 'Time Travellers: Soviet Tourists to Eastern Europe', in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. by Anne E. Gorsuch, Diane Koenker (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp.205-226.

destabilise a moral edifice which had thrived upon renunciation.[116] The paper's 'contemporaries' gave clear evidence of these tensions, and their own lack of a consistent viewpoint on the creation of wealth, of comfort, and of the moral value of *things*, is illustrative of one of the regime's basic dilemmas as the Cold War entered the Soviet home.

Such tensions had been present since NEP, when the temporary abandonment of Communist construction for the inequalities of a capitalist economy left activists disillusioned.[117] Historians have shown how, in the 1930s, Stalin's ideology of abundance caused disquiet amongst a population which struggled to get hold of essentials, let alone caviar and champagne, while the post-war period saw the gaudy figure of "an orange lampshade, scalloped and fringed" threatened to bury Soviet ideological purpose in *meshchanstvo*.[118] However, the potential mismatch between rhetoric and reality was less threatening to the regime under Stalin, not just because of the risks of voicing one's anger publicly, but because Stalin's policy of abundance had asceticism built into it. Soviet citizens didn't need to 'renounce' the material because the material had already renounced them. Hard work and sacrifice were facts of life, adding a sense of sobriety to the acquisitive official values. What was different – and potentially more divisive – was the fact that the leadership was now saying that such abundance was within reach.

The introduction of an explicit *moral dimension* into Soviet communism represented an attempt to ground these tensions. Exemplified by the imposition of the 'Moral Code of the Builder of Communism', part of the Second Party Programme at the Twenty-Second Congress, this moral focus provided a necessary complement to the regime's promises of material plenty, as a way of

---

[116] For more on this dynamic see Amir Weiner, 'Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution: The Life Cycle of the Soviet Revolution, 1945–1968' *Slavonic and East European Review* 86/2 (April 2008), pp.208-231.

[117] See, for example, Anne E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia. Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[118] Sheila Fitzpatrick 'Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Taste and Privilege' in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp.227-229; Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.37.

preventing Communism from slipping into *meshchanstvo*.[119] The regime also attempted to rein in subversive energies by regulating excessive consumption through the regulation of everyday life and taste.[120] Through the press, including KP, and through advice literature, Soviet citizens were informed that their interiors needed to be free from all ornamentation ("What is excessive is bad"), while excessive consumption was to be kept in check.[121]

Despite attempts to create a harmony between the rhetoric of material comfort in the present and revolutionary transformation in the future, a logic of either/or nevertheless prevailed, and turned into a battle between imminent material plenty, on the one hand, and a spirit of renunciation and a fetishisation of physical toil, on the other. But while some journalists perceived such renunciation as proof of authors' high ideals, others considered their values of self-sacrifice to be out of step with the epoch. Although communism was now synonymous with universal plenty, its opposite – universal asceticism – was equally powerfully put forward. As a character in one of the paper's frequent "documentary stories" exclaimed: "To hell with everything material!"[122]

Such conflicts are visible in the testimony of Otar Ioseliani, adapted from his diaries, which we encountered in the previous section.[123] Ioseliani is a Georgian filmmaker (today living in Paris and continuing to make films) whose second feature, *April* (1961), had been heavily criticised as being divorced from "real life". He was ordered to go 'closer to the masses' and learn about the labour of ordinary workers at an iron ore factory in Rustaveli, Georgia. The document's advocacy of action over thought, of manual over intellectual labour,

---

[119] See Catriona Kelly, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.314-15; Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), Ch.7; Deborah Ann Field, 'Communist Morality and Meanings of Private Life in Post-Stalinist Russia, 1953-1964' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996, Ch.1.

[120] Victor Buchli, 'Modernism, and the Fight Against 'Petit-bourgeois' Consciousness in the Soviet Home' *Journal of Design History* 10/2 (1997), 161-176; Susan E. Reid, 'Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinisation of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev' *Slavic Review* 61/2 (Summer 2002), 211-252.

[121] M. Mertsalova, 'Chto cherezchur, to plokho' *Rabotnitsa* 11(1964), 30; Kelly, *Refining Russia*, Ch.5.

[122] Klara Skopina, 'Piatera otpravliaiut za mechtoi', KP 11/1/63, 2.

[123] Ioseliani, 'Geroi'.

provided a rejoinder to one of the main groups challenging the party's authority: young, urban intellectuals. The 'formalist' Ioseliani was a representative of those who had set out on the wrong path; his induction into the world of manual labour was to provide proof of its redemptive power, and show a more authentic collective away from the unhealthy influence of effete urban intellectuals. Ioseliani's testimony (which, transcripts indicate, was "corrected" by journalists), puts this notion across powerfully:

> … a feeling of life in its fullness, a feeling of beauty and joy, as well as a feeling of closeness to people, a feeling of spiritual communion with any person (important: with precisely anyone, with everyone!) is possible only when you've finished work, when you sit opposite them and lay your tired hands on your knees.

Other diarists shared this suspicion. Golovinskii argued that: "A man should not live by his thoughts and feelings alone" and blamed his unhappiness on the fact that "I think too much and do to little", while one reader wrote to Valia Chunikhina claiming that his intellectual abilities "almost ruined [his] life".[124]

Such comments were in many ways a throwback to the past. In one letter from Sergei Chekmarev, written in the late-1920s or early-1930s, the concept of the diary as a means for introspection was derided. All that was for "intellectuals (in the pejorative sense)", for those who were "'studying' themselves and digging in the depths of their psychology –'oh, what a bad person I still am, what a weak-willed person, what things I've done …'" All that was "for young ladies who are in love with Douglas Fairbanks".[125] In the thirties, the builders of Komsomol'sk-na-Amure and Magnitka had relied on brute force, not on intellect. In the forties, the victors of the Great Patriotic War had required bravery. In sixties, once more it was physical toil, rather than intellectual labour that seemed to be prized above all. So perhaps these paeans to the joys of sweat and grind were an attempt to recapture heroism for a generation too young to have fought in the war. Deputy Editor Boris Pankin saw Ioseliani's "exaggeration of the significance of physical labour" as "a strength,

[124] Golovinskii, 'Stranitsy'; 'My liubim'.
[125] Chekmarev, 'Na perednem krae', 16/9/56, 4.

not a shortcoming".[126] For him, Ioseliani's "diary" was important because it showed an individual at "the stage at which the person is found. A diary is a photograph of that stage [...] through which one needs to go through."

But Aleksandr Egorov was uncomfortable with Ioseliani's praise for physical labour. For him, following the filmmaker's logic through to the end led to some worrying conclusions:

> What comes of this? No intellectual, no artist will be able to find a path [не дано найти путь] to a person of physical labour as long as this creative individual does not become a steel founder, a milkmaid, [work on] a fishing vessel, or break their back with tiredness. This is amateur philosophising [Это философия на мелком месте]. Creative labour is equal to physical labour. Maiakovskii didn't talk about himself as an unskilled labourer for nothing. And so this poetry of physical tiredness is, in my opinion, a sin [грех] of the material, which could have been more interesting in terms of its length and in terms of the themes it touches on.[127]

This raised the question of just how 'typical' the heroes of these diaries should be. Were their actions to be emulated by *everybody*, or was the lack of culture that some of them displayed in their striving for the future a fault in the material?

Such questions had already reared their heads the year before in response to the diary of Tadeusz Skibinskii. Having left his home town without a second thought, Skibinskii is told what to expect in his adopted home of Bratsk: "It turns out we're most likely going to live either in wagons or in tents, but maybe even in a dormitory", but when he arrives, he seems almost disappointed to find that his new home is more comfortable than expected: "We expected that it would be just tents and wagons, but there are so many houses with two floors. And the dirt is something temporary: they'll soon asphalt the streets".[128] After a while, he travels to the nearby town of Taishet. On his way to Bratsk months earlier, he passed the town and found that it was made up of antiquated buildings and huts. But, in the intervening period, things have changed:

---

[126] 24/2/64, d.361, l.72.
[127] Ibid., ll.62-63.
[128] Skibinskii, 'Dogoniaite'.

> We're housed in a dormitory with two floors. To be honest, at first I couldn't get used to it. Cleanliness, wardrobes with mirrors, lace curtains on the wall, rugs, a bathroom and toilet ... just like in Mogilev. After wagons and tents it's kind of unusual. I'd got used to them.

Before long, Skibinskii, tiring of all this comfort, decides to leave:

> I was bored in Taishet. A warm room, clean bed-sheets, a shower, a cinema – I had all that in Mogilev, and now it was the same thing there. Why did I come here? I could have stayed at home. There's no difference. No, that sort of life's not for me.

He moves on to a small station in an even more remote location: "The dormitories are being renovated so at the moment you'll have to live in a wagon," explained Vasilii Zakharovich Popov, the head of personnel. "Is that okay?" "Did I come here to work or to be comfortable?" replies Skibinskii.

Because of the logic of comfort, Skibinskii found an 'authentic' life, exemplified by material deprivation and geographical desolation, impossible to find. He went in search of new challenges, new things to construct, but, once completed, they became the very thing he was fleeing from. Skibinskii thus became a nomadic figure, escaping the very logic of Communist development: asceticism today in the name of comfort tomorrow. But wardrobes, mirrors, and lace curtains that were central to notions of the new *kul'turnost'*, while curtains had historically been a "universal symbol of *kul'turnost'*, through which public and private space could be divided".[129] But for a man who lived in public view, such a partitioning of an inside space from the outside was quite unnecessary – an emasculation from which Skibinskii needed to flee as soon as possible to reassert his independence and his masculinity.[130]

Skibinskii could be considered a product of his time. Vail' and Genis saw hostility to furniture as a typically *romantic* gesture:

---

[129] Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, 'Directed Desires: Kul'turnost' and Consumption' in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1881-1940*, ed. by Catriona Kelly, David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 299.

[130] On domesticity as emasculation see Christine Varga-Harris, 'Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era', *Journal of Social History* 41/3 (2008), 571-572. For a counter-argument, see Susan E. Reid, 'Happy Housewarming!: Moving Into Soviet Apartments' in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, ed. by Marina Balina, Evgeny Dobrenko (London: Anthem Press, 2009), pp.150-151.

> The aggressive morality of the builder of communism didn't want to wait while the philistine [мещанин] crawled across the dam with dynamite in his teeth. The philistine should be disarmed at the point of passive preparation: the sofa. It was easier for him to lie down than yearn for the road. That's probably why the main hatred of romantics was for soft furnishings: a plush armchair, a bed with an ornamental frame [кровать с шарами], and a couch [тахта-«лира»].[131]

Romantic gesture or not, Skibinskii's hostility to comfort didn't escape the attention of the paper's staff. In an editorial meeting, Tamara Afanas'eva commented:

> This person is running away from elementary hygienic requirements. He left Mogilev because he had a room there, he left Taishet because there were clean bed-sheets and a warm bathroom. [...] He runs wherever the most minimal of conveniences are lacking. I don't know how it looks to journalists, but for me, the creation of discomfort as a goal in itself is strange. It reeks of feeble-mindedness.[132]

Skibinskii's actions were, according to one system of ideals, "feeble-minded" and "strange", but according to a system that actively suggested that discomfort was moral, his actions were only to be applauded. Opposed to the ideals of Communist plenty, Skibinskii stood in a line that ran from Chernyshevskii's Rakhmetov to the ascetics of the 1920s. While the leader of the country was arguing over kitchens, Skibinskii was denouncing "domestic trash", just as the paper itself had done three-and-a-half decades before.[133]

Yet not all diarists shared Skibinskii's unease: Ol'ga Popkova wrote in hers that "We have our own apartment – a room with a kitchen. We've started to feel at home and we've improved our apartment. Now we're in bliss," though she, too, drank a toast to "hated, worthless comfort".[134] But frequent references to unreliable girlfriends who wanted to "live the good life", or 'friends' who ridiculed diarists for travelling East because romanticism was temporary showed that there was at least some perception that these heroes were

---

[131] Vail'/Genis, p.130. See also Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism* (London: Berg, 2000), pp.44-45.
[132] 30/9/63, d.349, ll.6-7.
[133] Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.43.
[134] Ol'ga Popkova, 'Eto i est' nastoiashchaia zhizn'' KP 15-16/6/56, 2.

swimming against the current.[135] Boyfriends, too, could be fickle, as a letter from Rita Vlasova's boyfriend showed:

> Rita, sweetheart, you have to understand, *romantika* is only good for books. Taiga, tundra, wastelands ... they're for special people, fanatics – physically strong, it's true – but fanatics who are also against [противен] urban comforts, just like I'm against sleeping under a cold sky. It's a difference of tastes – that's all there is to it. I've never witnessed that sort of fanaticism in you: you're an urbanite. [...] I think all this will pass. You're still blind, but you'll see and believe![136]

His final words to Rita thus reversed the usual biographical trajectory of blindness to sight: to believe, here, was not to see the light of *romantika*, but to reject it. Idealistic journeys to Siberia were not *romantika*, but fanaticism, and there was an ever-present danger that one could spill over into the other. Given this opposition of values, quite inevitably, Rita and her boyfriend split.

If romanticism still consisted in saying "to hell with everything material", then this suggested that the image of the hero had failed to adapt to changing material circumstances which encouraged comfort. Thanks to builders like Skibinskii, the country was inching closer to Communism which was, according to the Party, a land of material plenty. However, under changed social and cultural conditions, was it still acceptable for heroes to display the same qualities of toil and struggle as their predecessors in the 1930s? If so, then it suggested that the values of culture and taste were, in reality, second order values and that displaying one's commitment to the cause through manual labour was what mattered above all. The continued reliance on models of heroism borrowed from the 1930s suggested that as the country moved towards that mythical 1980 date, journalists were struggling to find compelling exemplars who represented both the need for self-sacrifice to build the future, and the material comforts that were now within reach. These tensions would become abundantly clear after Khrushchev's ouster.

---

[135] E.g. Danilenko, 'Ia poliubila'; Aleksandr Mishchenko, 'Filosofskii kamen'' KP 18/11/64, 2.
[136] Vlasova, 'Adres schast'e'.

4 Epilogue: The End of *Romantika*

For all the problems identified by journalists, it would be wrong to suggest that the series was unsuccessful – otherwise it would not have run for more than a decade. Amidst the criticism, there was also praise – especially as readers responded positively to the stories of their contemporaries. Sometimes the journalists themselves were surprised by the response the diaries received. At a meeting of the Union of Journalists in 1964, Editor-in-Chief Iurii Voronov read out a letter from V. Berezhnoi, a tram driver from Odessa who had been inspired by the diary of Zoia Abramova. Though Voronov considered the diary "no better than a run-of-the-mill diary", Berezhnoi called it a "poem about people in love with the earth, about enthusiasts, about the 'obsessed'…"[137] Figures like Valia Chunikhina inspired many readers and won a kind of minor celebrity: Anatolii Petrianin was one of more than two-thousand readers who wrote to her, telling her that he had contemplated leaving his own romantic dream in the wilderness of Teia, Krasnoiarsk, because of problems with a lack of materials, but then asked himself: "Would Valia have left? Of course she wouldn't. So I stayed, too".[138] Thus, it appeared that journalists had managed to find contemporary heroes whose lives resonated with readers.

Despite their public popularity, journalists began to worry about diaries' negative effect on their audience, and wondered whether continually promoting the virtues of *romantika* might not be out of step with a nation which was moving from romanticism to rationalism. Those staff who criticised the rubric were raising a key issue: what were the qualities that should make up the contemporary hero – were they the same as for any other citizen? And what was their relationship to contemporary society?

After October 1964, these questions found new answers. While the "Contemporaries" rubric continued after Khrushchev's ouster, its mood and its focus changed significantly. In 1965, only a quarter of the paper's sixteen published diaries were written by contemporaries, the rest were historical

---

[137] 'Stenogramma Vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo seminara 'Zhurnalist i trebovaniia zhizni'', 23/06/64. GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.244. ll.35-37.
[138] 'My liubim'.

diaries written during the war. By 1968, in a faintly ridiculous move, diaries from the Leningrad blockade were published under the "Contemporaries" rubric.[139] This reflected the growing demand for the press to promote the country's "revolutionary traditions" – a clear attempt to repair the nation's damaged sense of a "useable past" – albeit at the expense of the paper's contemporaries. Even contemporary diaries became far less 'romantic': the diary of teacher Natasha Iablonskii, although it took place in Kamchatka, was actually an attack on local bureaucracy.[140]

It was clear that the romantic focus of the rubric was becoming less central to the paper's output: staff devoted less time to discussing the rubric, and their reactions were sometimes less than effusive. Indeed, in their growing rejection of *romantika*, they recalled the aborted critical debates of 1956. In 1960, the story of four sailors trapped in the Pacific Ocean for forty days was a sensation that captivated the nation, providing proof of the moral fibre of the Soviet citizen. But in 1965, when soldiers survived four weeks in a snow drift on a mountain, Kubichev argued that the article should have asked why the soldiers were not rescued sooner: "The article should have been critical. The soldiers would have been a hundred times more grateful to us".[141]

In June 1965, an article by Leonid Zhukhovitskii focused on the damaging effects of the media's "abstract romanticism".[142] It focused on two disillusioned teenagers in the small town of Orekhovo-Zuevo, who wanted "dangerous work, romantic work, like in books, like in films". They rejected their dull lives in their hometown, and, despite their lack of qualifications, dreamed of taking part in a geological mission. Zhukovitskii believed that their rejection of everyday life in a suburban town was attributable to the lazy education they had received from teachers and the mass media:

> *Romantika*! How many honourable, but still very naive children furiously idolise its extremely hazy form? And how many lazy managers, negligent educators, untalented film directors and literary commentators try to cash in on it with

[139] Boris Gubanov, 'Zhizn' soldata', KP 17/1/68, 4.
[140] Natasha Iablonskii, 'God pervyi, ne poslednyi' KP 2/10/66, 2, 4.
[141] 24/2/65, d.382, ll.4-5.
[142] Leonid Zhukovitskii, 'Kto podnimaet parus?' KP 2/6/65, 2.

> neither rhyme nor reason [почем зря]? ... It is very complicated to seriously prepare teenagers for the real difficulties awaiting them in the future. How much easier to rapturously blow into paper sails!

He was especially scathing about what he called the *romantika* of the train ticket:

> Get a ticket, leave for the hazy faraway expanses, and all questions will solve themselves! For there, in the faraway expanses, is the authentic life (obviously very different from the inauthentic one here). There, you find genuine people (again, as opposed to the philistines and *stiliagi* here). So pack up your suitcase and run fast to the ticket office – perhaps also from all difficult problems and, at the same time, from your own personal shortcomings.

For Vitalii Ignatenko, a recent graduate from MGU, who would become Director of TASS within a decade, the article showed the "side effects" of the paper's unthinking *romantika*.

> We say that a person will find some sort of happiness, that changes in character await, but not about the fact that this character depends above all not on distance, and not on changing home, but is within the person themselves, wherever they work. First of all, one needs to forge character in oneself.[143]

Ignatenko also saw the heroes of 'romantic' sketches as coming from a narrow sphere of society: "steeplejacks, plumbers, constructors – people who must perform great feats". But, in doing so, the paper was focusing on "a group of people who [found] themselves outside the material sphere, the sphere of everyday life [вне материальной сферы, в сфере быта]."[144] In other words, the paper was only able to find *romantika* in a limited range of atypical (and perhaps uncultured?) professions.

In October, journalists discussed a diary by Vera Trotskaia, a thirty-four year-old philologist from MGU, working as a concrete worker, electrician and bricklayer in Aramil', a small settlement in the Urals.[145] Kira Nikiforova was unimpressed, commenting:

> I don't in any way doubt that [the diary's] author is an absolutely pure, sincere, inspiring person. But nevertheless, reading what was written by this person,

[143] 8/6/65, d.383, ll.1-2.
[144] On this point see Boris Pankin, 'Effekt romantiki' KP 20/7/65, 2-3.
[145] Vera Trotskaia, 'Ia za polnyi spektr', KP 30/9/65, 3-4.

> these rapturous lines, these difficulties in a rosy haze, this bunch of difficulties, I felt an ever-strengthening feeling of pity for the author ...[146]

Nikiforova wondered what a graduate of MGU was doing in such a backwater and asked: "Is this a search for the self or something that benefits the cause? Is it an inclination for a change of scene or civic consciousness? An escape from an unhappy life or a search for personal happiness?"[147] She further claimed that publishing the diary under the 'contemporaries' rubric was a mistake, since such contemporaries should be 'typical':

> Is the true young hero of our time a personally unsettled, wavering [неустроенный метущийся] person, without their own home, without their own family, for whom the whole poetry of life is in difficult, sometimes unjustified and back-breakingly [непосильно] difficult work? I don't agree with this. I don't agree with the raising of personal disorder and asceticism into typical features of the contemporary leading young person.[148]

There emerged a growing belief amongst journalists that the time for romantic renunciation had passed: what was typical was not a search for the self in exotic climes, but to settle down in Moscow and enjoy the fruits of one's education.

The harmful results of *romantika* were illustrated by a 1966 article which described luxurious living conditions at the new Saiano-Shushenskaia GES, prompting two readers to make their way there on spec.[149] However, as an article published a year later revealed, there was no job waiting for them.[150] The paper admitted that it should have made clear to readers that they needed to contact the management of the construction site beforehand, indicating their specialty: non-specialists evidently need not apply. The era of "naked enthusiasm", of turning up on a construction site with nothing but passion, was coming to an end.

Also on the wane was journalists' appetite for faraway places. In late 1967, science correspondent Vladimir Gubarev condemned the paper's focus on the Arctic and Siberia as "exoticism", and spoke of how those in the periphery felt about *romantika*:

---

[146] 12/10/65, d.386, l.20.
[147] Ibid., l.21.
[148] Ibid.
[149] G. Viatkin, O. Krat, 'Stroika bez palatok' KP 26/10/66, 1.
[150] G. Boshchkin, 'Na Enisei za pirogami?' KP 11/1/67, 2.

> … I know how those who live in the wilderness … feel about such material. It just makes them smile and feel a lack of respect towards journalism. Why? Because a journalist, having sat in a plane, goes there for three days, runs around, takes a look around, goes home and then writes. But people live there for twenty years or more, it's their home, and these are not the problems that bother them … what bothers them are the most ordinary things, which we don't write about because we rarely go there, and see only the exotic side of things ...[151]

Other articles in the press came to the same conclusion: an article published in *Zhurnalist* in 1968, by Mikhail Briman, the Deputy Editor of the newspaper *Krasnoe znamia*, argued that journalists had embellished their descriptions of the Arctic for the sake of *romantika*, but, in doing so, had wrought a damaging effect on society.[152] The article claimed that work in itself was not fulfilling. Talking of open skies and difficulties to be surmounted tempted people to faraway places, but once those had been overcome, boredom soon set in. Briman called on journalists to use more sociological research to investigate the life plans of young people, so that they could avoid printing damaging articles.

By 1969, some journalists felt that the "Contemporaries" rubric was so out-of-step with the values of the time, that it made more sense to end it. At a *letuchka* in October 1969, a correspondent in the Department of Propaganda, Tamara Gromova spoke about a diary by Aleksandr Iur'ev which, she said, brought about "melancholy thoughts".[153] In the past, she argued, such diaries had been positive for the paper. She added that the diaries of Golovinskii and Chunikhina had been valuable because they contained a "spiritual portrait of our contemporary. A whole epoch."[154] Now, however, they were an anachronism; the paper needed a "more analytical relationship to the world." The paper needed to find a new "vein", and, once it had found it, Gromova suggested, it was time to finish with the rubric. Grigorii Oganov agreed, saying that, while the diaries might have been a victory for the paper ten years ago, times had changed: "With today's requirements, material that five to ten years ago seemed good, and was even named the best material of the week or the

---

[151] Ibid., l.7.
[152] Mikhail Briman, 'Romantika bez prikras', *Zhurnalist* (1968), 18-19, 26.
[153] Aleksandr Iur'ev, '"Eto ia bez stepi ne mogu …"' KP 12/10/69, 2.
[154] 23/10/69, d.488, l.72.

month, can seem ordinary. A definite shift in time has taken place, a shift in the criteria that a person uses to judge material, wanting to see in it some sort of discovery."[155] A couple of months later, Boris Ivanov reported back to the paper on the results of a commission devoted to discussing KP's future work. He expressed the grandiose sentiment that "in diaries our epoch came into existence", but expressed disappointment at the paper's recent texts. In response to the opinion of some Commission members that the rubric should be shut down, Ivanov argued that it should be retained "but inspire a new life, in correspondence with the time in which we live".[156]

This was, in fact, the question that the rubric had raised all along: the relationship of heroes to their epoch. While under Khrushchev there was a belief that sheer enthusiasm and purity of soul was sufficient, the early Brezhnev era was a period in which rational calculation, exemplified by economic planning and discussion was the order of the day. In 1966, a Komsomol Agit-Prop report claimed: "We live in an era when the high level of the reader forces journalists to study their hero more thoroughly and more deeply, and find new ways of showing our contemporary, of uncovering his/her basic qualities."[157] The article mentioned a number of new forms: the interview-portrait, the research sketch, and the "social portrait" of the contemporary hero.

Between 1967 and 1968, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* published its own rubric, entitled simply "Social Portrait". Rather than readers' diaries and letters, these portraits were written by professional journalists. Each portrait dealt with a particular profession – the *kolkhoznik*, the teacher, the fisherman, the driver – and explained its relevance to the construction of socialism.[158] In this way, the rubric dealt with Ignatenko's complaint that the paper dealt with an all-too-narrow circle of occupations. These portraits differed from the time-honoured articles about heroic milkmaids and toiling factory workers insofar as

[155] Ibid., l.83.
[156] Proizvodstvennoe soveshchanie KP – 'Komsomolka-70', 15/12/69, d. 491, ll.87–90.
[157] 'Zadachi komitetov komsomola po usileniiu rukovodstva molodezhnoi pechat'iu, redaktsiami radio i televideniia', 1966, RGASPI, f.1M, op.34, d.52, l.4.
[158] E.g. V. Agranovskii, 'Shofer', 9/2/67, 4; V. Liashenko, 'Chaban', 19/3/67, 1-2; L. Pleshakov, 'Rybak', 7/4/67, 1-2.

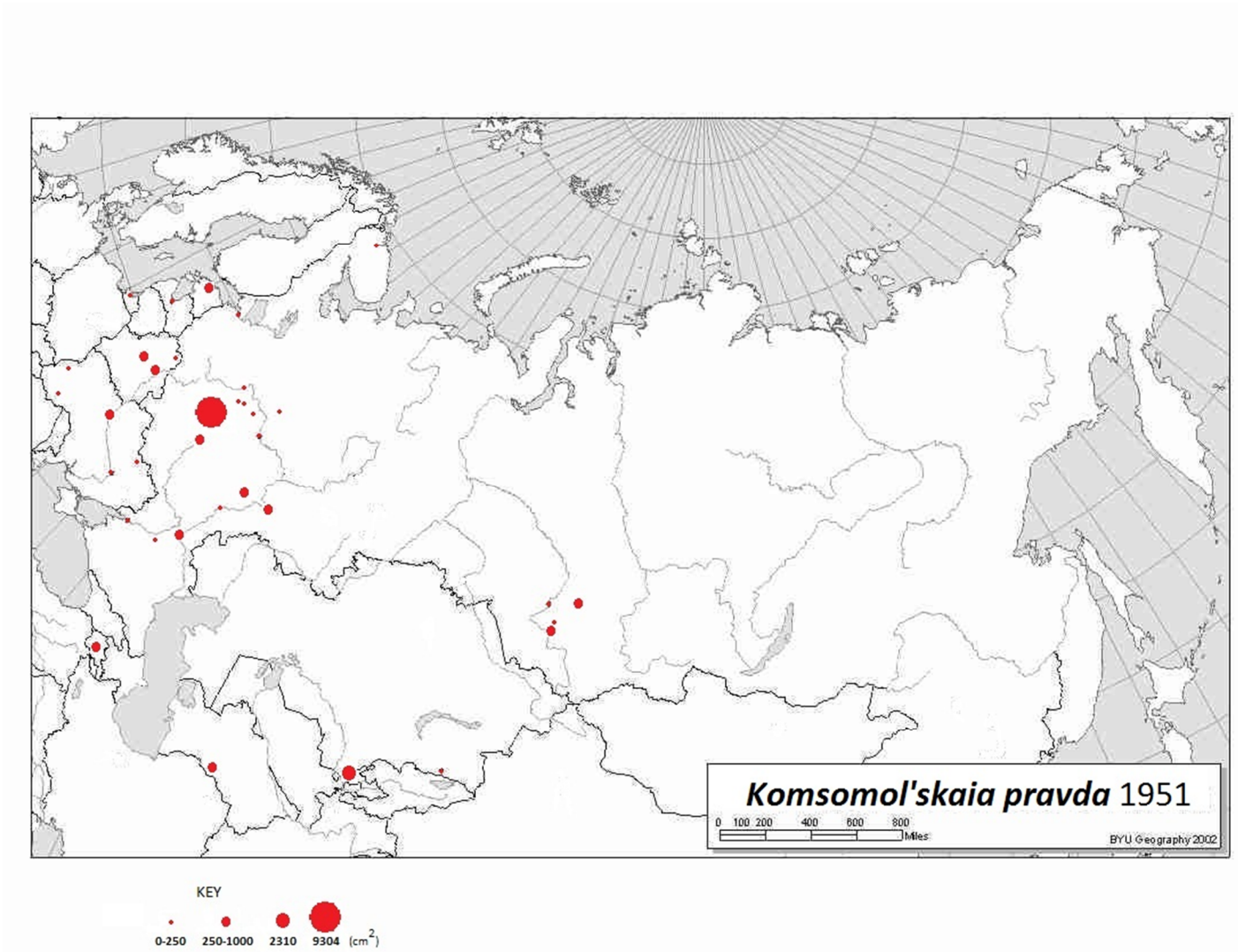
they described not how exceptional their protagonists were, but how typical. Editorial Board member Inga Prelovskaia praised the rubric for "showing the social profile of a profession, the philosophy of labour, and … the typicisation of the contemporary hero."[159] Indeed, insofar as the series aimed to run the gamut of Soviet professions, nothing could have been more typical.

However, it was not clear exactly why their protagonists were heroic, nor whether they could serve as a mobilising ideal. The series suggested that the nation was now entering a period of prolonged consolidation, and that heroism no longer required grand revolutionary gestures. Vail' and Genis spoke of the "collapse of the hierarchy of romantic deeds" in the late 1960s, such that even giving blood became a mark of heroism.[160] While schemes like the Baikal-Amur Mainline were testament to the fact that the leadership needed to maintain at least a public façade of revolutionary dynamism, it was no longer clear whether such self-sacrificing heroes were in tune with contemporary values. At a 'production meeting' at the end of 1969, Kapitolina Kozhevnikova suggested that the "romantic enthusiasm" of the past had given way to new values: "efficiency and pragmatism". The task of the paper was to ensure that today's pragmatists did not turn into "cynics" and "careerists" who "neglected all moral categories", but were "harmonious individuals".[161] But Inna Rudenko argued that the loss of heroes was leading to disillusionment amongst young people, who no longer had a goal in life. She asked what the paper should do with an "avalanche of desperate revelations" of the type "I wanted to do something great, something extraordinary, but I have to simply live: eat, sleep, work".[162] What could the paper do to ensure that "young people [possessed] a craving, not just for ideas, but for a concrete ideal"? As the 1970s dawned, the answer to that question was far from clear, and illustrated a growing gap between the Brezhnev leadership's vision of the future, and the ability of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* journalists to turn this into a compelling vision of the contemporary hero.

---

[159] Party Meeting, 29/9/67, d.41, l.42.
[160] Vail'/Genis, p.137.
[161] 'Proizvodstvennoe soveshchanie KP: 'Komsomol-70'', RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.491, ll.126-129.
[162] Ibid., ll.28-29.

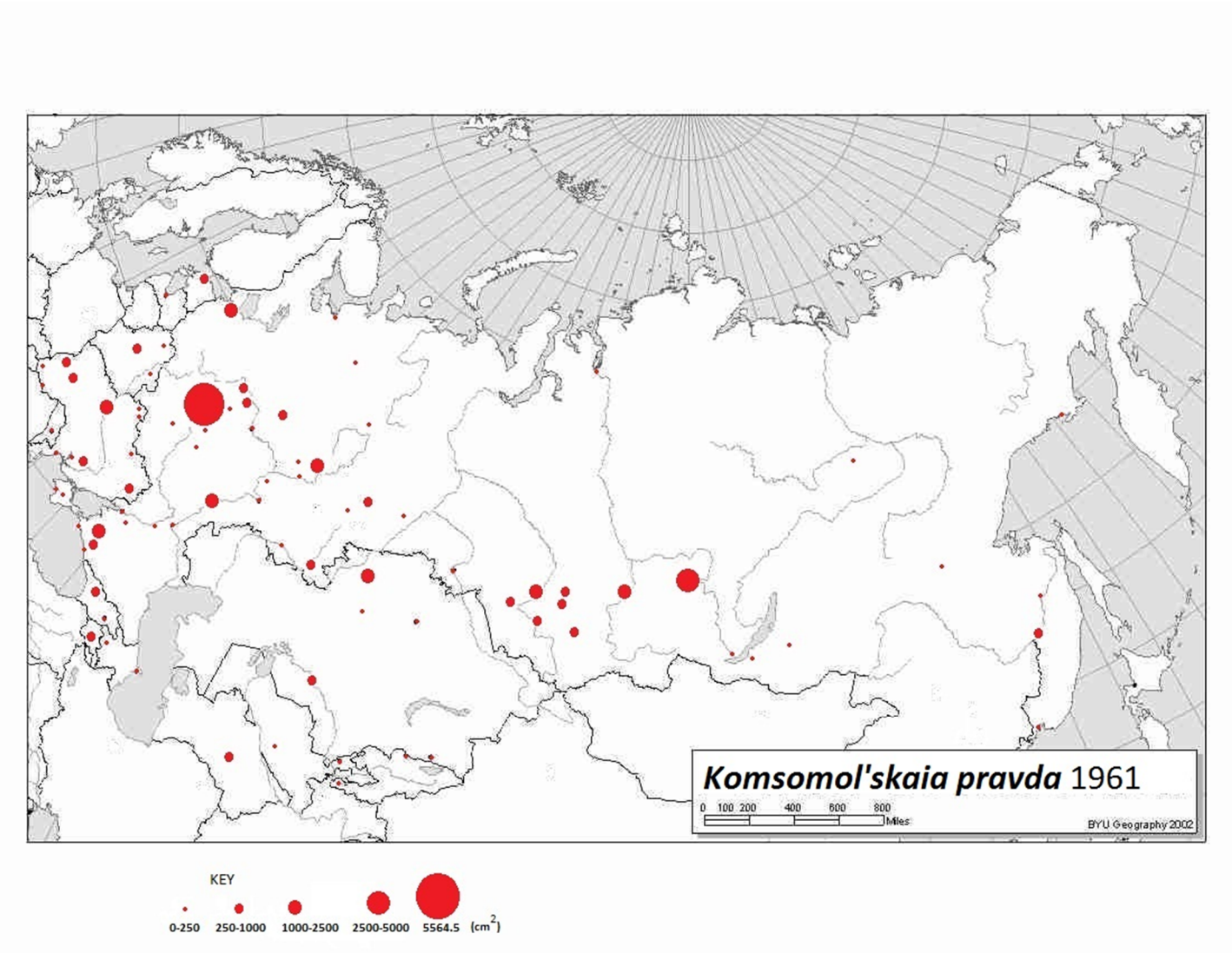
FIGURE 2: Column Space Devoted to Different Geographical Locations, 1951



The maps in Figures 2 and 3 show the amount of newspaper space devoted to geographical locations over twelve editions in 1951 and 1961.

Articles were measured, and overall figures for different locales tabulated and plotted on the map.

FIGURE 3: Column Space Devoted to Different Geographical Locations, 1961



CHAPTER 4 | **"This number says a lot": The *Institute of Public Opinion* and the Rebirth of Polling in the Soviet Union (1960-68)**

The first three chapters of this thesis have looked at how *Komsomol'skaia pravda* journalists sought to represent a number of different aspects of everyday life: shortcomings, news, and the 'contemporary'. They have shown how the representational norms of the post-Stalin press were challenged and (often, but not always) reasserted. The final two chapters concentrate on the relationship between journalists and their readers. They show how journalists sought to mould their audience with the aim of creating an ideal public. Chapter 5 analyses KP journalists' discussions of their readers, showing how an educational impulse came into conflict with the desire to make the paper more popular. This chapter, meanwhile, asks the question of how journalists coped with the diversity of Soviet public opinion through a case study of one of the paper's boldest experiments: the creation of a polling institute within KP's Department of Propaganda.

On May Day 1960, Francis Gary Powers' plane was shot down over Sverdlovsk. Though US officials initially insisted that it was a weather plane, analysis of the wreckage revealed the presence of photography equipment. After a long hiatus while Soviet authorities calculated how best to exploit the incident, the press leapt into action, with KP warning "Don't play with fire, Mr Aggressor!" and printing letters from readers claiming that there was "No limit to the indignation".[1] A fortnight later, the Paris Summit broke down in acrimony after Eisenhower refused Khrushchev's demand for an apology.

Three days after this, a front-page article asked "Will mankind succeed in averting war?" "Yes! Replies the Thirtieth Meridian," came the answer.[2] On the face of it, the article was a typical response to the tense international situation, stressing Soviet unity and optimism in the face of provocation. However, this

[1] 'Ne igraite s ognem, gospoda agressory!' KP 8/5/60, 4.
[2] B.Grushin, V.Chikin, 'Udastsia li chelovechestvu predotvratit' voinu?' KP 19/5/60, 1-3.

unity was demonstrated not via the ideological cliché of the 'unity of the Soviet people', but through a poll of public opinion, carried out by an organisation whose name had hitherto not been heard in Soviet life: the 'Institute of Public Opinion' [Институт общественного мнения], or 'IOM', an initiative that started life in the paper's Department of Propaganda.

The Institute would become one of KP's most successful innovations, running for eight years and attracting well over a hundred thousand replies to surveys on subjects as diverse as the nation's quality of life, the state of Soviet customer service, and the national anthem. In the West, its very existence was taken as proof that Soviet journalists were "actually asking the young what their problems are, rather than telling them"; visitors came from as far afield as Canada and France, seeing the IOM as a symbol of democratisation.[3]

The Institute's founder, Boris Grushin, has already given a potted history of the Institute in research published before his death.[4] For that reason, this chapter seeks to present a new angle on the relationship between journalists, the intelligentsia, the public, and the regime, using the Institute as a means for gauging journalistic attitudes to readers' opinions, and their ideas about the role of the paper in reflecting and moulding public opinion. The Institute's surveys performed an important democratising function, popularising the notion that the Soviet public held diverse viewpoints, and upholding the importance of expressing and debating one's opinion. However, the IOM's mission statement was telling, in that it affirmed that it would "consider the varied opinions that seem most important for the practice of propaganda work."[5] In practice, the Institute was used, not so much a means for democratisation, but as a tool for moulding Soviet citizens. Journalists were never able to jettison the idea that the Soviet public needed to be educated and persuaded. When the Institute's

[3] Edward Crankshaw, 'Soviet Youth Gets a Chance to Speak' *The Observer* 15/1/61, 7; Galina Ronina, 'My zhili ideiami obnovleniia', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta* ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 47–49.

[4] B.A. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia. Zhizn' 1-aia: Epokha Khrushcheva* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001); B.A. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia. Zhizn' 2-aia: Epokha Brezhneva*. (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003).

[5] 'Institut obshchestvennogo mneniia 'Komsomol'skoi pravdy'' KP 19/5/60, 1.

surveys deviated from this task, revealing signs of social discord or delivering results that were unsuitable or simply uninteresting for the purposes of propaganda, journalists expressed their discontent. The failure to find a place for the IOM ultimately led to the Institute's closure – ironically, at a point in the late 1960s when the technocratic Brezhnev leadership's hunger for sociological research was at its keenest. Thus, this chapter suggests that journalists' political vision of remaking Soviet society could come into conflict with their professional desire to create an effective and interesting newspaper.

This chapter relies on main four sources: the IOM's original newspaper articles; editorial letuchki; Grushin's three-volume history of public opinion in the Soviet Union, entitled *Russia's Four Lives* (in which Grushin gives a history of the IOM, provides survey results and excerpts from unpublished reader responses); and Grushin's personal archive, posthumously donated to the Hoover Institution, containing preliminary work on surveys and other 'behind the scenes' materials, including a handful of readers' letters and survey responses. Such material only scratches the surface of the documentation that the Institute created, but much of the original documentary material has been lost or destroyed.[6]

1 Beginnings: 1917-1960

The founding of the IOM was an important moment in legitimising sociological ideas after many years in which sociological methods, including polling, had been effectively banned. To understand the significance of the IOM, it is therefore necessary to trace the long-term history of the relationship between Bolshevism and sociology, and the philosophical ideas that underpinned them. Given the sociological origins of Bolshevik ideas, the tensions that emerged between Marxist principles and 'bourgeois' empirical sociology after the revolution could be considered a battle *within* sociology, rather than external to it. Before the revolution, Lenin spoke of the importance of "social researches" in constructing socialism, but this commitment ended after the Bolsheviks took

[6] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.67.

power.[7] The regime claimed that Marx provided a totalising vision of society and social progress, which rendered worthless all attempts to capture social reality empirically. Lenin was unprepared to compromise with so-called 'bourgeois' sociologists, and under his leadership the leading sociologist, the "anti-Marxist" Pitrim Sokorin was exiled.[8] However, empirical research remained important to the regime throughout the 1920s, as studies into readerships and audiences were useful in determining the effectiveness of Party propaganda.[9]

Under Stalin, mistrust of the so-called 'bourgeois experts' led to the eclipse of empirical sociology. Sociology was *de facto* banned, and key exponents were purged; in the 1960s, those who had survived became known affectionately as the "last of the Mohicans".[10] In place of social heterogeneity was planted an image of a society without divisions, where public opinion was unanimous on all key questions. After the war, signs of change became visible. A section of Sociology was formed at the Academy of Sciences; critiques of bourgeois sociology (a means for keeping abreast of Western ideas) appeared in *Bol'shevik*, and an article appeared in the academic journal *Voprosy filosofii* demanding that academics look to "real-life examples in the building of communism", setting the door ajar, if only slightly, for empirical research.[11] However, empirical research remained illegitimate, and even after Stalin's death, the situation failed to improve: in 1953 an invitation to attend the second World Congress of Sociology

---

[7] Martine Mespoulet, 'La 'renaissance' de la sociologie en URSS (1958-1972). Une voie étroite entre matérialisme historique et 'recherches sociales concretes' *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 16 (2007), 58-59.

[8] On the debates of the 1920s see Elizabeth Ann Weinberg, *The Development of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp.1-10; Mespoulet, 58-61.

[9] Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts for the Reception of Soviet Literature.* Trans. Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Michael S. Gorham, *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).

[10] Nikolai Novikov, 'The Sociological Movement in the USSR (1960-1970) and the Institutionalization of Soviet Sociology'. *Studies in Soviet Thought* 23 (1982), 97; Weinberg, *Development*; Alex Simirenko, 'The Development of Soviet Social Science' in *Professionalization of Soviet Society*, ed. by Alex Simirenko, C.A. Kern Simierenko (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1982), pp.67-81.

[11] Gennady S. Batygin and Inna F. Deviatko, 'The Metamorphoses of Russian Sociology' in *Eastern Europe in Transformation: The Impact on Sociology*, ed. by Mike Forrest Keen and Janusz Mucha (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp.13-15; Elizabeth A. Weinberg, *Sociology in the Soviet Union and Beyond: Social Enquiry and Social Change* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.8.

in Liège was turned down, due to the fact that the questions studied by the Congress were "not of interest to Soviet academics".[12]

Yet there were many individuals, mostly recent philosophy graduates, who wanted to know more about the society in which they lived, and saw sociology as a means to do so.[13] The situation slowly began to change, but it could not gain traction without an institutional transformation. The creation of the Soviet Sociological Association in 1958 represented a step forward, but, rather like the Union of Journalists, it seems to have been created a means for Soviet elites to prove that they had "this 'thing'", sociology, that the West also had.[14] Those elites wanted to prove that Soviet sociology, resting as it did on the solid base of Marxism-Leninism, was actually superior to Western 'bourgeois' sociology. Although Soviet participation in the World Congresses of Sociology in Amsterdam in 1956 and in Milan in 1959 was an important step towards legitimation, Soviet delegates were, on the whole, made up of Party ideologues, who argued their way through proceedings – sometimes going as far as to impugn the discipline's right to exist.[15] As two Soviet participants at the Milan Congress stated:

> Inquiries must be conducted on the theoretical basis of historical materialism … that is, to apply to the particular social fact [a] Marxist understanding of socio-economic formations (laws) which determine the relation between the economic structure of society and its superstructures ... the relationships between classes, etc.[16]

This surely made depressing reading for a younger cohort of philosophy graduates, and served as a reminder that the fault lines in Soviet academia no longer divided 'sociology' from 'anti-sociology', but a doctrinaire Marxist-

---

[12] *Sotsiologiia i vlast': Dokumenty i materialy, 1953-1968. Sbornik 1*, ed. by L.N. Moskvichev (Moscow: Academia, 1997), pp.15-16.
[13] Novikov, 98.
[14] Ibid., 103.
[15] Novikov, 103; *Transactions of the Fourth World Congress of Sociology (Milan & Stresa, 8-15 September 1959). Volume III* (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1961), 44-46 (as an example). See also See *Sotsiologiia i vlast'*, pp.47-53. Batygin and Deviatko suggest that these shows of ideological unanimity at international conferences were 'for show', and that the situation within the Soviet Union was healthier. See 'Metaphorphoses', p.17.
[16] T. Oizerman, A. Okulov, 'Ob itogakh IV Vsemirnogo sotsiologicheskogo kongressa' *Voprosy filosofii* 13/12 (1959), 72-86.

Leninist conception from an alternative notion based on *empirical research*. But the battle was not cast in terms of Marxism and anti-Marxism (nor could it be). Rather, it was a "family quarrel" for the heart of sociology, in which both sides claimed support from Marxist theories.[17] The IOM's founder, Boris Grushin, like a number of other philosopher-sociologists, reached his intellectual maturity in the early 1950s in a *kruzhok* devoted to a re-reading of Marx's *Capital*; in the early 1960s he would proudly proclaim to fellow sociologist Vladimir Shlapentokh that he was a Marxist.[18]

A key article of 1957, by the East German historian and economist Jürgen Kuczynski, illustrated the utility of Marx quite clearly.[19] Marx's idea that social forces were the central factor in defining individual consciousness had typically been interpreted to mean that the tenets of historical materialism rendered concrete social analysis redundant. However, Kuczynski argued that "consciousness" could not be understood without empirical study of "everyday life": '*Istmat*' would therefore be 'elevated' to the lofty position of sacred universal, while sociology would do the dirty work of social inquiry.[20] Orthodox scholars, many of whom sought to maintain prestigious institutional positions from younger rivals, rebutted Kuczynski's assertions on the basis of what Marx 'really' meant, but in this fashion, empirical research was squared with Marxist-Leninist theory, and eventually became the cornerstone of the Party's attitude towards sociological research.[21]

Progress may have seemed painfully slow to sociologists, yet by 1960, three centres of sociological research on the empirical model had been established in Moscow, Leningrad, and Sverdlovsk, plus a sector for the investigation of "new forms of work and everyday life" at the Academy of

---

[17] Peter L. Berger, *Marxism and Sociology: View from Eastern Europe* (New York: Appleton Century, 1969), vii

[18] Svetlana Tabatchnikova, *Le cercle de méthodologie de Moscou: 1954-1959: Une pensée, une pratique* (Paris: EHESS, 2007), p.61; Vladimir Shlapentokh, *An Autobiographical Narration on the Role of Fear and Friendship in the Soviet Union* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p.69. On Marxism-Leninism and the intelligentsia see Vladimir Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp.66-68.

[19] Iurgen Kuchinskii, 'Sotsiologicheskie zakony' *Voprosy filosofii* 5 (1957), 95-100.

[20] 'Metamorphoses', 18.

[21] See A.I. Verbin, V.Zh. Kelle, M.Ia. Koval'zon, 'Istoricheskii materializm i sotsiologiia' *Voprosy filosofii* 5 (1958), 151-155. On this process see also Mespoulet, 65.

Sciences.[22] These hubs investigated a wide range of questions, such as the structure of Soviet society, families, problems of labour, and methodological issues.[23] This was, to be sure, "abstract empiricism" – sociology in the service of the state – but it nevertheless allowed for the investigation of concrete social reality, rather than endless permutations of Marxist theory.[24] Though teaching was almost non-existent and the subject lacked a public profile, Soviet sociology at last had the institutional base that it required to propagate itself.

At the start of 1960, the Deputy Head of the Department of Propaganda, Aleksei Romanov, spoke, perhaps thinking of public opinion research centres in Hungary and Poland, of the need for the press to undertake "sociological research".[25] At a *letuchka* days later, one of the meeting's attendees, Editor-in-Chief Iurii Voronov related Romanov's instructions to staff, calling sociology "unploughed virgin soil", and admitting that the paper had little experience in that area. He called on the Department of Propaganda to examine the question.[26] Four months later, the Institute of Public Opinion, which was to bring public opinion research into the mainstream, saw the light of day, headed by Boris Grushin.

Like many prominent sociologists of post-Stalin period, Grushin was born in the late-1920s or early-1930s. Well known figures of the stature of I.S. Kon (b.1928), Vladimir Iadov (b.1929), Leonid Gordon (b.1930), Gennadii Osipov (b.1929), were all in their early thirties at the time that the IOM was created. Too young to go to the front, these sociologists were on the verge of attending university at the war's end. Grushin entered the philosophy faculty of

---

[22] Mespoulet, 66.

[23] D.V. Ivanov, 'Sotsiologiia v Rossii: Institutional'naia i kontseptual'naia struktura' in *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia: istoriia i sovremenennye problemy*, ed. by N.G. Skvortsov, V.D. Vinogradov, N.A. Golovin (St. Petersburg: Izd. S.Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2007), p.108; Weinberg, *Development*, p.19; Mespoulet, 69.

[24] C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp.60-86, 131-132.

[25] Aleksei Romanov, 'Vysokaia ideinost' pechati i zhurnalistskoe masterstvo' *Sovetskaia pechat'* 1 (Jan 1960), 4-10. Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.59; Weinberg, *Sociology in SU*, pp.99-100; Edward Beliaev, Pavel Butorin, 'The Institutionalization of Soviet Sociology: Its Social and Political Context' *Social Forces* 61/2 (December 1982), 420, On the influence of Polish sociology more generally, see Boris Firsov, *Istoriia Sovetskoi sotsiologii, 1950-1970-e gody* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Evropeiskogo universiteta, 2012), pp.270-278.

[26] 11/1/60, d.268, l.30.

MGU in 1947 with the belief that "Communism was a sacred cause; that everything was going in that direction, that power thought only about resolving all problems, creating a new type of society, and so on".[27] He later claimed that only when the realities of the campaign against 'cosmopolitanism' became clear did he begin to search for a new understanding of the world. Out of his friendship with fellow logicians Georgii Shchedrovitskii, Merab Mamardashvili, and Aleksandr Zinov'ev emerged an underground *kruzhok*, or *kompaniia*, called the 'Moscow Methodological Circle', which sought to produce a theory of logic and cognition based on *Das Kapital*; its participants later claimed that their work was purely apolitical, and that logic was the least ideologically compromised of all the branches of philosophy, allowing them to investigate pure human relations.[28] Indeed, Grushin's later work in public opinion could be considered as an extension of this work into the human consciousness; whether it was less ideologically compromised is debatable.

It was Zinoviev who secured Grushin a post at KP, after the latter's thesis was rejected by MGU (partly as a result of their friendship) but after that point, their subsequent career paths would diverge.[29] Zinoviev became a professor of logic at MGU, but in the 1970s, his 'sociological novels', *The Yawning Heights* and *The Radiant Future*, led to his effective expulsion from the USSR. Grushin's relationship to Soviet power was somewhat more conflicted. During his career, Grushin consistently seemed to occupy a space between professional goals and state imperatives. Such spaces were unstable, sometimes quite informal, and prone to contradictions. They offered room for innovation, but no guarantee as to where the limits of innovation lay. Although those spaces allowed new initiatives to take root, they were also unstable and ultimately short-lived.

---

[27] Tabatchnikova, p.61.
[28] Ibid., pp.44-47, 61.
[29] Boris Grushin, 'My vse vremia veli voiny za svoi predmet'. Nauchnyi fond im. G.P. Shchedrovitskogo. <http://www.fondgp.ru/lib/chteniya/x/pub/12> [Accessed: 21/7/2009]

2 1960-1963: The Early Surveys

The 'science' of public opinion polling was in its infancy in 1960. In a country shielded from the scientific literature for the best part of thirty years, the first methodological article was not published until the year after.[30] The IOM's first polls, conducted in 1960 and 1961, reflected this and were successes on a journalistic, rather than a scientific level.[31]

However, before discussing those surveys in more detail, it is necessary to examine the difference between two terms which are commonly translated into English as 'public opinion': *obshchestvennost'* and *obshchestvennoe mnenie*. On a basic level, one might see the difference between them as a difference between subject and object: *obshchestvennost'* signifies the holders of public opinion, and *obshchestvennoe mnenie* the opinions that they held. But in practice, the divisions were not so clear. Before beginning, it is important to note a semantic subtlety that is lost in translation. The grammatical root of both terms, общество, came as a calque translation from the Greek, *κοινωνία*, meaning 'common' or 'communal', and, in practice came to exist in opposition to a notion of the public [публика]. This latter was identified by one academic as a weaker form of collectivity, synonymous with the fragile social bonds created by capitalism.[32] In other words, the social dimension of both *obshchestvennost'* and *obshchestvennoe mnenie* was central to its appeal, and was seen to describe a superior form of collective identity to the West's alienated social ties.

Obshchestvennost' signified an educated, socially active stratum of the population. The term entered the Russian language in the late-Eighteenth Century as a secular response to the concept of religious collectivity, *sobornost'*.[33] It was taken up by radicals in the mid-Nineteenth Century, where it came to signify a sense of public duty and a commitment to social

---

[30] M.N. Rutkevich, L.N. Kogan, 'O metodakh konkretno-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia' *Voprosy filosofii* 3 (1961).
[31] On the methodological problems of these surveys, please see Section 4 of this chapter.
[32] L.K. Uledov, *Obshestvennoe mnenie Sovetskogo obshchestvo* (Moscow: Sotsetgiz, 1963), pp.70-74.
[33] Catriona Kelly, Vadim Volkov, '*Obshchestvennost', Sobornost*': Collective Identities' in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.26.

transformation as well as a concern for educating public opinion.[34] The term survived into the Soviet period, and in the Second Edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia (1954), it defined, either a group of socially active individuals, a social organisation, a people or a society, or *obshchestvennoe mnenie*.[35]

Despite its appearance here, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie* did not merit its own entry in the encyclopaedia, pointing to the fact that it reached common usage far later. The term appeared in V. Bekhterev's 'Collective Reflexology' (1921) as "so-called *obshchestvennoe mnenie*", but it seems that *obshchestvennost'* was the preferred term into the 1950s.[36] Though there is evidence of the term being used in the mid-1950s (see page 245), it was the IOM's surveys that helped it gain common currency.

Early works on *obshchestvennoe mnenie* seemed to view it as identical to *obshchestvennost'*, as the example from the 'Great Soviet Encyclopaedia' shows. It could not be otherwise, for scholars posited a close connection between social system and the nature of public opinion. The correctness of the Soviet social system led to a unanimity of opinion, while the diverse views expressed in bourgeois societies were considered to be the inevitable product of social division. This led to debates over the ontological status of the individual opinion, and its relation to public opinion. For L.K. Uledov, a personal opinion [частное мнение] or the sum of personal opinions could not be considered to be *obshchestvennoe mnenie*, "because personal opinions refer to the sphere of *individual* consciousness, whereas public opinion refers to public consciousness".[37] He opposed the individualist connotations of *obshchestvennoe mnenie*, and instead defined public opinion in a socialist society as a "unanimous

[34] Ibid., p.27.
[35] 'Obshchestvennost'' in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 2-e izd. Tom 30* (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1954), p.418. Karl Loewenstein suggests that the principles of *obshchestvennost'* animated the work of Soviet writers in the period following the Twentieth Congress, but fails to suggest that the term itself was an animating concept ('*Obshchestvennost'* as Key to Understanding Soviet Writers of the 1950s: *Moskovskii Literator*, October 1956-March 1957', *Journal of Contemporary History* 44/3 (2009), 473-492.
[36] Quoted in Uledov, pp.73-74.
[37] Uledov, p.66.

judgement of the people on questions of social life, touching on the common interest and demanding practical solution".[38]

However, a theoretical work by Grushin, published in 1967 upbraided Uledov for remaining entirely on a theoretical plane, and pointed out that the IOM showed that there was not one survey where the public's views could be considered unanimous.[39] Grushin argued that, while *obshchestvennoe mnenie* could not be considered as the aggregate of individual opinions, it could not exist outside the form of expressions of individual members of society: "The sum total, groups of individuals are the subject of *obshchestvennoe mnenie*, *obshchestvennost'*".[40] The close link between *obshchestvennoe mnenie* and *obshchestvennost'* was, in Grushin's explanation, both problematised (public opinion's link with a unanimous community was called into question) and confirmed (the terms were seen as synonymous).

But if the two terms really were synonymous, why had it been necessary to introduce a new term into the lexicon? Though the exact route to the adoption of the term *obshchestvennoe mnenie* is unclear, we might suggest that it was called upon to perform a function that the old term could not. Soviet society was modernising and becoming more complex; Stalinist concepts were inadequate for describing its character. This was one of the main reasons for the return of sociology. Mikhail Rutkevich, a sociologist on the Soviet social structure in Sverdlovsk, argued that the Twentieth Party Congress had "placed social processes at the centre of attention", which created a demand for empirical sociology. "Anyone who taught from university textbooks on historical materialism … wanted to enrich the general theoretical situation, to bring it into the system, to fill it with real content regarding our reality".[41]

But there were also more worrying social changes that needed to be explained. One prominent scholar has shown that the post-Stalin period saw the emergence of a Soviet public opinion, an unprecedented outpouring of

---

[38] Ibid., p.89, see also pp.79-81.
[39] Boris Grushin, *Mneniia o mire i mir mnenie. Problemy metodologii issledovaniia obshchestvennogo mneniia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967), p.169, 173-175.
[40] Ibid., p.171.
[41] M.T. Rutkevich, 'Mnogoe bylo predresheno' in *Rossiiskaia sotsiologiia 60-x*, p.239.

debate amongst citizens.[42] The events of 1956, with their unpredictable eruptions of public sentiment, had shown that the views of Soviet citizens were not, as far as the regime was concerned, as rational, deliberative, or homogeneous as they might have hoped. The debates of the literary world over books like *Not By Bread Alone* have been analysed by Karl Loewenstein as illustrating the importance of *obshchestvennost'* for understanding the actions of the intelligentsia, but for the regime these were not the ideas of a Party-minded public sphere.[43] One might therefore suggest that *obshchestvennost'* defined public opinion as it should be, whereas *obshchestvennoe mnenie* was increasingly called upon to describe public opinion as it actually was. It is telling that, in 1974, when the third edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* was published, *obshchestvennost'* had disappeared from its contents, but *obshchestvennoe mnenie* was now included, in the form of an entry written by none other than Boris Grushin.[44]

For the avoidance of confusion, it is also worth reflecting on the divergent meanings of the term 'science' in journalists' discussions. Grushin, though he never actually used the term in discussions with colleagues, embodied scientific principles in practice. This meant keeping abreast of the latest academic developments and innovations in poll design. For colleagues at KP, however, 'science' meant something quite different, signalling above all a positivistic belief in objectivity and truth. When survey results were positive for the regime, they illustrated the scientific nature of Soviet Communism, and the objective approval of the public. However, this belief in objectivity was not valuable in itself, which brings us to a third meaning. When surveys ceased to deliver affirmative results, the Institute was accused of being 'pseudo-scientific', of delivering material more suited to academic journals than to the press. Here, 'science' signified dry academicism, something quite inappropriate for a youth newspaper. The tensions between these understandings of the 'scientific'

---

[42] Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions and Disappointments*, 1945-1957. Trans. Hugh Ragsdale (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), pp.139-201.
[43] Loewenstein, '*Obshchestvennost*". On Hungary and public opinion see Zubkova, pp.191-201.
[44] Boris Grushin, 'Obshchestvennoe mnenie', in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia. 3-e izd. Tom 18* (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1974), pp.242-243.

purposes of the Institute would grow over time, and explain, at least in part, why the Institute ended in mutual recrimination.

These considerations were far from the minds of Soviet journalists in the early days of the IOM, however. In their subject matter and results, the Institute's first surveys provided a series of sensations for the paper, and brought its name to national prominence. Its first survey, carried out in the wake of the spy plane scandal was simple and effective, comprising only three questions: (1) Will humanity succeed in averting war (yes/no) and (2) why? and (3) What, above all, should be done to consolidate peace?[45] 96.8 per cent of respondents replied that humanity would indeed avert war, delivering a clear endorsement of Party policy. As Grushin summarised many years later, its message was: "Socialism: yes!; Capitalism: no!".[46] In an article, Grushin and Deputy Head of the Department of Propaganda, Valentin Chikin, waxed lyrical:

> This number says a lot. The Soviet people, irrespective of sex, age or profession are committed optimists, a buoyant people [жизнелюбые]. The entire construction of its thought is permeated with the pathos of creativeness, endeavour and optimism. They are distinguished by their high ideals, their unshakeable belief in truth, and in the victory of the cause for which they fight.[47]

The survey therefore suggested, just as propaganda had always insisted, that the Soviet public was united in its optimism and high ideals. A second survey on living standards delivered much the same result, with the vast majority responding that their quality of life had improved in recent years. "From day to day the life of the Soviet individual is becoming better, becoming richer," gushed Grushin and Chikin (no doubt inadvertently channelling Comrade Stalin).[48]

In a nation where legitimacy had to be secured without recourse to the ballot box, the endorsement of the public played an important role:

> When one reads this material, then it's immediately evident that our Soviet people approve of the policies of the party, that the party is today devoting

[45] Grushin/Chikin, 'Udastsia'.
[46] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.110.
[47] Grushin/Chikin, 'Udastsia'.
[48] B. Grushin, V. Chikin, 'Kak izmenilsia uroven' vashei zhizni? O chem rasskazali ankety' KP 7/10/60, 2.

> special attention so that our people live well, so that people have somewhere to live [...][49]

As Vladimir Babanov's words show, the key attraction of the IOM's first two surveys lay in its endorsement of the regime's policies. Voronov said of the IOM's first survey: "When we put out an article, they say to us – that's the author's opinion, the opinion of our collective. But when we say '5000 people replied to this question,' then that's public opinion [общественное мнение] ..."[50] For KP journalists, whether or not surveys conformed to the latest methodological advances was of little interest; what was important was the 'objective' status of the data. In this way, the IOM's first surveys showed public approval of the regime's policies, presented not as opinion, but as 'scientific' fact.

This made KP's propaganda stand out from its competitors. Aleksei Geguzin, the Head of the paper's regional correspondent network, claimed of the Institute's quality of life study that "many journalists at central newspapers envy this material".[51] Babanov and science correspondent Iaroslav Golovanov both emphasised the importance of *Pravda*'s positive evaluation of the IOM's work, as did Editor Voronov, who mentioned words of congratulation from other journalists – and the Central Committee, too.[52] Grushin described Voronov waiting on the phone for the assessment of the Party's ruling elite, and eventually being told that Khrushchev thought the Institute's first article was "wonderful".[53] The story has the ring of myth to it but, whether or not the event occurred, it certainly illustrates how journalists at the paper perceived that the IOM had captured the attention, not just of colleagues at other papers, but also figures within the highest corridors of power. In a nation where the press was characterised by *partiinost'*, the approval of the Party's most powerful figure

---

[49] 10/10/60, d.277, l.89.
[50] 23/5/60, d.272, ll.134-35. See also Voronov's similar comments on the second survey at the meeting of 10/10/60, d.277, l.115-116.
[51] 10/10/60, d.277, l.91.
[52] Ibid., 89-90, 115; 23/05/60, d.272, ll.117, 133. For *Pravda*'s response see: 'Iz poslednei pochty: Da! - otvechaet tridtsatyi meridian' *Pravda* 20/5/60, 2; 'Iz poslednei pochty: O chem rasskazali ankety' *Pravda* 8/10/60, 2.
[53] B.A. Grushin, 'Gor'kii vkus nevostrebovannoisti' in *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia shestidesiatykh godov v vospominaniiakh i dokumentakh*, ed. by G.S.Batygin, S.F. Iarmoliuk (Saint Petersburg: Russkii khristianskii gumanitarnyi institut, 1999), p.213.

was the highest marker of social capital. This approval would sustain the Institute through darker days.

The two years between 1961 and 1963 can be considered a transitional period. During this time, the IOM carried out five surveys which blurred the boundaries between the IOM as sociological research institute, and the IOM as a branch of the Department of Propaganda.[54] Two surveys (on youth and on families) are discussed in the next section, while the two surveys treated below help to illustrate the increasing tensions between the Institute's journalistic roots and its founder's scientific ambitions.

A simple-yet-effective questionnaire carried out in January and February 1962 (but, for reasons unclear, not published until 1964) bore all the hallmarks of the IOM's desire to produce readable propaganda. It asked 1000 children aged eight and nine how they understood fifty 'adult' words. Children wondered whether an 'altar' was someone from Altai province, and if '*panikhida'* (Tsarist-era funerary rites) was when "somebody shouts out, there's panic, and everybody runs away".[55] But the survey was more than just a humorous look at Soviet children and their understanding of the world. The pupils had been asked to define words which referred to the so-called '*perezhitki proshlogo*', the 'survivals of the past': 'Virgin Mary', 'down-and-out', 'profiteer', and 'bribe'. Less than ten per cent knew the meaning of any of those words, apparently proving the success of the revolutionary Soviet state in eliminating such problems from daily life. The results, while showing that not all negative tendencies had been overcome, apparently illustrated that: "Recent hardships, foolish habits, and antiquated models are being expunged from our reality".[56]

The result was yet another enormous success: *Pravda* published an article in praise of it, while opinion within the *redaktsiia* was glowing: "Their answers speak for themselves," said Valentin Liashchenko. "We should have

[54] I omit a 1961 survey, the Soviet-French collaboration "In whose name do you study?", which was never completed because the data were lost.
[55] 'Ot deviati do desiati' KP 2/8/64, 4; Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.353.
[56] 'Ot deviati'.

said [to the reader – S.H.]: "Comrades! Look closely, pay serious attention to these kids' answers, take note of the process that is taking place!"[57] He also mentioned the enthusiastic reaction of readers: "They've been talking about nothing else for two days in Moscow. People read it and ask "and did you read it?", "and did you read it?"[58] The survey marked a continuation of the Institute's previous work in so far as it was geared towards demonstrating the glory of the age through statistics. It was different, however, in that it was no longer even ostensibly geared to investigating key social issues. Instead, it aimed at the rather loftier task of showing how the Soviet state had succeeded in overcoming the backwardness of the Tsarist past.

The choice to conduct such an idiosyncratic survey may have been influenced by the relative failure of a previous survey on Brigades of Communist Labour, carried out at the end of 1961. The Brigades were founded on the belief that enthusiasm and the creation of tightly-knit, self-policing collectives could improve productivity.[59] Given the enormous amount of press coverage of the initiative, the collective might have expected a ringing endorsement of the regime's policies. Writing some years later, Grushin called the survey a unique referendum on public opinion "regarding the course and the outlook for the 'construction of communism' in the country and the masses' conception of communism as such".[60] Grushin was exaggerating the survey's significance somewhat, but the public's indifference to the initiative was nevertheless striking. Of the eleven surveys that invited readers to write to the paper, this was the least popular by a distance, garnering only 1295 responses.[61] Grushin later suggested that the results showed that, for many people, the movement "didn't exist, just like the construction of communism didn't exist. Of course, it was a shocking result – shocking for propaganda, for ideology, and that's why

---

[57] 4/8/64, d.365, ll.38-39, 42-43 [38].
[58] Ibid. l.38.
[59] Thomas Riha, *Readings in Russian Civilization. Volume 3: Soviet Russia, 1917 to Present* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp.766-773; Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual In Industrial Society – The Soviet Case* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.117-118.
[60] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.251.
[61] The next least popular survey, "Five questions to mums and dads" (1967), received three times more responses – and was a failure that led to the Institute's closure.

we had very great difficulties in publishing the results."[62] Grushin's reading is very much a retrospective one, however, and another explanation for the survey's lack of success might be its desire to focus on dense technical issues. One correspondent, a certain Salutskii, pronounced himself "astonished" by the complexity of the questions, suggesting that some of the questions demanded "theoretical preparation". He suggested that such a complicated *anketa* might "stem the flow" of replies, and urged the IOM to rethink its approach.[63]

Salutskii's comments touched only on the questionnaire, but it wasn't just the survey that was problematic, but also the amount of resources that the Institute demanded. The IOM, was an initiative of one of the paper's most powerful departments: the Department of Propaganda. For many at KP, the IOM was not a scientific research institution, but a newspaper rubric that should have been devoted to glorifications of the regime's policies. That Grushin was taking it more seriously would become a bone of contention. In early 1962, Kamil' Devet'iarov implied that the IOM was having a negative effect on the work of the Department of Propaganda, and suggested to Grushin that "If the Institute is weighing you down, let's close it in ten days' time … and get [посадим] the whole Department of Propaganda back to its main job". To Grushin's telling reply, "We already have a main job: the Institute", Devet'iarov replied: **"**We can't substitute all propaganda, all questions of ideological work for the work of the Institute of Public Opinion".[64]

Later that year, the IOM was under attack once more for publishing the full conclusions of the Brigades of Communist Labour survey in an academic journal:

> Who do they think they are, arbitrarily publishing materials in a journal? They're an editorial department – an editorial rubric. The *'Institute of Public Opinion'* ... for some reason we write it with capital letters. I don't know ... the department of science, the department of agriculture are usually written with small letters.[65]

---

[62] Boris Grushin, "Institut obshchestvennogo mneniia – otdel *Komsomol'skoi pravdy*" in A.I. Volkov, *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000). Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty* (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), p.57.
[63] 21/8/61, d.303, l.34.
[64] 8/1/62, d.317, l.31.
[65] 17/9/62, d.325, l.54.

Here, David Novoplianskii, the paper's longest-serving journalist, having written in the very first edition of the paper, did not even bother to hide the implication that the Institute was getting too big for its boots. This may seem to be a trivial matter, but that is precisely the point: the IOM was an enterprise of social significance, but its eventual downfall was partially the result of mundane office politics: it was not just the regime that imposed limits on journalists' actions.

For these journalists, there was a serious point: there was a time and a place for scientific research, and it was not in the press. The IOM's latest articles, claimed Novoplianskii, were "written rather pseudo-scientifically [наукообразно] and not accessibly [мало-популярно]. Extremely academic, difficult phraseology."[66] He then compared the IOM's previous work, which was produced "in a newspaper style" [по-газетному], to its new material. He accused Grushin and his colleagues of harbouring ambitions above their station:

> Now there are considerations of a prestigious publication, a striving to become a 'classic', to sit on the bookshelf. They don't really consider how to use the newspaper, how to aim it at a newspaper audience. And if we really love and esteem the Institute's workers [...] then we have to tell them the truth to their faces. That would be the first demonstration of our love and esteem.[67]

Science was getting in the way of the Institute's work, and only tough love, according to the paper's elder statesman, could get the Institute back on track.

All of which suggests that Grushin's initial diagnosis that that results were subject to censorship were wide of the mark. In fact, the results were the least of Grushin's worries, with Alik Shalaev calling the survey "an extremely significant piece of work".[68] The problem was rather that the scientific demands of the Institute were getting in the way of good newspaper practice. Why, asked military journalist N.S. Kiselev, was the Institute starting on another survey on the family before having printed the conclusions to the survey on Communist Labour?[69] The answer was that, because of the limited resources of the Institute, such conclusions needed to be analysed without computers – a slow and tedious process. But, for many journalists, properly worked out conclusions

[66] Ibid. l.55.
[67] Ibid. ll.55-56.
[68] Ibid., l.52.
[69] 8/1/62, d.317, ll.26-27.

were an irrelevance. The important thing was to create material that was fit for the press: something that was worked out "in a newspaper style". Given Grushin's determination to plot his own course, these frictions between newspaper form and academic aspirations would only increase over time.

3 What is Public Opinion For?

In 1963, the Institute was at a transitional stage. It had published surveys which clearly endorsed the regime's policies, but also materials that pointed to social problems, such as the survey on Communist Labour and a survey on families. As we have suggested, there was a continued tension between the IOM's role as a producer of propaganda, and its scientific role in investigating Soviet society. However, a continuing conflict over the meaning and functions of public opinion is also worthy of discussion. Polling implies giving equal weight to respondents' answers, even if that weight is only statistical. And yet, in a Soviet state where public values were considered in normative terms, the value of such heterogeneity was not recognised. A rift emerged between public opinion as a record of social diversity, and public opinion as a force to be manoeuvred towards a pre-defined goal.

While the IOM's earliest surveys provided an argument for equating *obshchestvennost'* with *obshchestvennoe mnenie*, they did not show the social unanimity that Uledov had suggested was inherent to it. Indeed, to the extent that even the first surveys allowed for open-ended answers, they played a role in challenging journalistic attitudes about their audience. Allan Starodub, reviewing the IOM's first survey at a *letuchka*, told colleagues:

> When this column first started, we often found that many of our colleagues, reading the responses, said "That's not true", "It's not like that" or "I don't agree with that". Today we need to redouble our efforts [перестраиваться] and immediately conduct a debate on the same sincere and critical [остром] level, and understand that often our opinions don't coincide with the opinions of our readers. If we've ventured to set up this Institute, then we should, within sensible limits, allow for free expression of our readers' opinions.[70]

[70] 23/05/60, d.272, l.133.

By revealing the heterogeneity of Soviet public opinion, initiatives like the IOM forced journalists to confront the fact that readers' opinions differed from their own (something that the next chapter will show in more detail). While under Stalin, propaganda was called upon to work on the public, to inculcate it in 'correct' modes of thinking, initiatives like the IOM played an important part in prompting the press to *reflect* the ways its readers thought.

The question of how far the newspaper could go towards echoing readers' opinions remained a moot point, however. Starodub warned colleagues about the dangers of distorting the evidence: "Because the opinions expressed are very diverse, it would only take for us to try to 'level' [нивелировать] them, to somehow try to foolishly hide them, for our Institute to come to an unhappy end."[71] Early surveys, which showed a high degree of unanimity, did not bring this issue to the fore, but later surveys did. Commenting on the paper's highly successful survey canvassing the views of Soviet youth on their generation, *The Observer*'s Edward Crankshaw suggested that, while many readers would be more than able to answer using the "familiar stereotypes", "the heretically minded" might be able to "form coherent little essays in frustration and discontent".[72] Crankshaw raised a valid question: how would the paper deal with "heretical" responses?

The answer was provided by one such "essay of frustration" from a nineteen-year-old Komsomol member from Moscow who wrote of her "apathy and indifference to everything".[73] Speaking of her goals in life, she argued that

> Money is everything. Luxury and success, love and happiness. If you have money, you have friends and comrades, you have everything you ever wanted. You judge those who don't work, who don't do anything, but you can only envy them, because they're making the best of life [пользуются жизнью] – we only live once!

Thus, her goal was to find a husband who would enable her to marry into wealth. She claimed that she would eventually get her way because "I do everything I want, and if I want it, I get my own way [раз хочу, то добьюсь

[71] Ibid., l.145.
[72] Crankshaw, 'Soviet Youth'.
[73] 'Molodoe pokolenie o samom sebe' KP 26/1/61, 2.

своего]". Her sentiments were in the minority, but far from isolated (2.3 per cent of readers – around 400 respondents – said they wanted to marry into money; 0.1 per cent – around 120 respondents – said that their goals in life were money and hedonism).[74] This was worrying for the regime: here was someone who felt no joy in constructing communism, derived no inspiration from the heroic feats of the Komsomols, and claimed that "money is everything".

And yet the letter's final paragraph read:

> I've told you everything I think. Of course you won't print my letter in the paper. But all the same I would really like it if you could persuade me of the error of my opinions on life. If you don't, then, of course, I'll never again write such a letter. I'd like to believe that I'm wrong.

Was the ending doctored? It is impossible to say without access to the original, but it perhaps telling that when Grushin printed the letter in his 2001 monograph, he omitted these words.[75] Without them, the letter ended defiantly "If I want it, I get my own way"; with them, it became a plea for help. Whatever was the case, the paper received more than a thousand replies, a selection of which were printed a month later.

Such discussions, which invoked the power of *obshchestvennost'* in resolving social issues, were popular throughout the post-war period, but particularly suited to a Khrushchev era where rigid behavioural norms were imposed on individuals by semi-organic collectives like comrades' courts and house collectives.[76] The replies to the young Muscovite should be seen as an attempt to prevent an individual from being 'lost' to a lifetime of vulgarity through the reforming words of the collective. Some were addressed to the paper, some directly to the Muscovite, and some employed a mixture. One writer took on the tone of a friend, giving out her address so that she could write to her. Others were more angry: "Your letter, dear girl, offended me," wrote V. Tiunin, a worker in Kuibyshev. "According to you, it turns out I'm a

---

[74] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.185.
[75] Ibid., pp.172-173.
[76] Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Deborah Ann Field, 'Communist Morality and Meanings of Private Life in Post-Stalinist Russia, 1953-1964' Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Michigan, 1996.

good-for-nothing [никчемный] person. But I am a worker, one who is building the future. You try to make me believe that I'm living for the present day. Nothing of the sort. I want to look at tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I want to work for the future as long as my hands and my brain allow".[77]

Others quoted from their own, sometimes tragic, biographies to educate her. A. Rudenko, a *kolkhoz* electrician from Kirovograd *oblast'* told of how his father died in the war, and his sister became seriously ill; after the war, his girlfriend died and he started to drink. However, after a short period of crisis, he retained a "belief in life", which was confirmed one autumn, when he and his Komsomol colleagues collected the harvest in the rain every day: "… would a girl striving only for good company, for a life without cares have been able to tolerate it? I don't think so!"[78] T. Bezmogorychnaia, from a small village in Bashkiria, wrote about her difficult life: "Yes, it's hard! But I'm happy! I'm happy when I see the happy faces of children when they find out from me something new, something they didn't already know. If it wasn't for my children, then I'd probably be as passive and indifferent as the girl from Moscow. Love for my work, and for the people that surround me give me strength".[79] Work, and the cause of communism, it was suggested, provided a kind of salvation: "Devote yourself to the common cause, and you'll understand happiness and the meaning of life," wrote E. Ermachenkov and B. Markov.[80]

Seen in the context of other reader discussions (see Chapter 5), the debate over the Muscovite's loss of faith might not seem to be anything out of the ordinary. However, to the extent the discussion was prompted by a poll of public opinion, they show how the IOM's purpose was not simply to *collect and analyse* the views of the public, but also to *discipline and normalise.* Limor Peer has written that:

> Polls generate an enormous amount of data which is used to 'characterize, classify, specialize; distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchize

[77] 'Chto vy dumaete o svoem pokolenii?' KP 24/2/61, 3.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

> individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate'.[81]

The treatment of the Muscovite shows this desire to 'disqualify and invalidate' quite clearly, as does the description of aberrant respondents to a poll on free time as 'Oblomovs' (after the hero of Goncharov's 1859 novel, who spends most of the book lying on his sofa).[82] In the Soviet context, the ability of polling to "distribute [individuals] around a norm" was less a criticism, and more of a recommendation. The IOM's job was inherently one of, as Starodub had put it in 1960, "levelling".[83] It aimed to guide public opinion towards a pre-determined norm of citizenship, regulating difference in the name of social unity. This normalising function of the press was not a specifically Soviet invention: it is a feature of the mass media more generally.[84] What is unusual in this case is both the use of polling as a platform for doing so, and also the willingness of journalists and academics to mention it explicitly.

Grushin's encyclopaedia entry of 1974 argued that "*Obshchestvennoe mnenie* regulates the behaviour of individuals, social groups and institutions in society, developing, assembling … or implanting certain norms of social relations."[85] A work of 1964 by the Leningrad-based academic Boris Erunov, discussing the work of the IOM, explicitly cited this disciplinary function:

> Those who adhere to the opinion of the majority, and take up a correct position, will feel that the correctness of their judgement has been upheld. This will help them to bring their opinion into life with clarity and determination. The others, who found themselves in the minority, will feel that errors have crept into their judgements, which they ought to correct. In any case they will feel that there is something wrong in the fact that they are in the minority and that will force them to think and rethink many of their views.[86]

At a *letuchka* the year before, Iurii Voronov spoke of the method by which the IOM's work proceeded: "First of all we direct *obshchestvennoe mnenie* towards a

---

[81] Limor Peer, 'The Practice of Opinion Polling as a Disciplinary Mechanism: A Foucauldian Perspective', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4/3 (1992), 238.
[82] A. Egorov, 'Podnimite perchatku, Il'ia Il'ich!' KP 24/11/63, 2-3.
[83] 23/05/60, d.272, l.133.
[84] See *The Manufacture of News. Deviance, Social Problems & The Mass Media*, ed. by Stanley Cohen, Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973).
[85] Grushin, 'Obshchestvennoe mnenie'.
[86] B.A. Erunov, *Sila obshchestvennogo mneniia* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1964), pp.49-50.

certain problem, secondly, we ascertain readers' opinions (*obshchestvennoe mnenie*) on these problems and, thirdly, by discussing and making conclusions, we form *obshchestvennoe mnenie*".[87] The year after, the IOM's Valentin Chikin told an audience at the Union of Journalists that:

> By publishing this material, we not only talk about what public opinion thinks [что собой общественное мнение представляет], but form it. Because when people have the full results in front of them, and analyse genuine public opinion [подлинное общественное мнение], then people can correct themselves [самокорректироваться]. We constantly receive letters from people who, having read our results, renounce their views.[88]

Evidence from readers' letters bear this out: a 23-year-old engineer from Moscow claimed that "The IOM helps us to understand the most important thing at a given moment; what it is necessary to say and what it is possible to say, and helps us to feel like the masters of our futures and to feel responsible for that future".[89] A Foreman from Zaporozh'e said of it: "Here we can share our thoughts, and read about the opinion of other comrades. That's very valuable. That's the only way we can examine the correctness or incorrectness of our thoughts and ideals."[90]

Nevertheless, others remained fearful of expressing their opinion. Even in 1967, instructions distributed to interviewers stated that: "The respondent needs to be made to understand that his/her selection was completely by chance, that the anonymity of his statements is completely guaranteed (his surname is not required, etc.)."[91] However, the printing of readers' names in full may have added to their disquiet: one reader who had written in with a 'minority' opinion implicitly acknowledged the IOM's stigmatising impact by writing a follow-up letter: "Without thinking I put my surname on the questionnaire, but I don't want my family's name to appear in the paper".[92] Individuals who submitted their opinions to the Institute must have been aware

[87] 22/4/63, d.342, l.30 (brackets in original).
[88] 'Stenogramma vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia publitsistov. Tom II', 4/6/64, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.243, l. 109.
[89] HIA, Boris Grushin Papers, Box 1, Folder 2 (emphasis in original).
[90] Ibid.
[91] 'Instruktsiia anketeru', April 1967, HIA, Box 4, Folder 21.
[92] 'Kak vy provodite svobodnoe vremia?' KP 11/1/63, 4.

that they were 'on display', and this is likely to have had the effect of reducing the volume of dissenting views.[93]

A 1966 academic article described the Soviet press "a machine", and readers as "the medium on which the machine works for the attainment of a pre-formulated [поставленный] goal".[94] The metaphor was not especially flattering to readers yet, as we have seen, journalists, too, saw the situation in these terms. Whether the IOM was printing responses, inviting judgement of individuals, criticising or ridiculing them, it was forming public opinion. The IOM machine provided a means for manufacturing a unanimous public opinion, forming an assembly line for producing model Soviet citizens. In that sense, the IOM provided a microcosm of the Soviet newspaper's relationship to its readership.

In 1962, the paper conducted a far-reaching survey on Soviet families. It asked readers whether they believed that young people were ready to start a family, and whether social provision was conducive to family life. Like the Brigades of Communist Labour survey, it revealed a range of problems with the preparation of young people for family life.[95] While it is clear that the IOM's workers saw the Institute as a means for forming public opinion, reading through responses to the survey, one is struck by, not by the homogeneity of responses, but by their diversity: from ringing endorsements of the party line, to the grumbling of middle-aged Soviet citizens about their inability to find housing. The respondents illustrate how it is wrong to assume that readers simply wrote their opinions, cut out the form, and sent it to the newspaper. Instead, they took the survey theme as a launching pad and wrote for five pages, ten pages,

---

[93] This, of course, may be a phenomenon common to the press in general, but it was more pronounced in the Soviet case. See Lucy Atkinson, 'The Public Sphere in Print: Do Letters to the Editor Serve as a Forum for Rational-Critical Debate?' Unpublished Conference Paper, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington DC, 2007.

[94] E.I. Pronin, 'Pechat' i obshchestvennoe mnenie', *Vestnik moskovskogo universiteta. Seriia XI (Zhurnalistika)* 6 (1966), 28.

[95] The following discussion relies on twenty responses to the survey, held in the Hoover Institution Archives. None of them have previously been published, and they represent the only original replies to the Institute's surveys available to researchers. The criteria for retention are unclear, so no statistical conclusions can be drawn. Nonetheless, the selection does give us an insight into the ways in which readers responded to the IOM.

sometimes more, often failing to answer the Institute's questions altogether. Some philosophised; some wrote essays; others told the story of their lives, but it is the differences that are most striking.

A. K., a pensioner from Dnepropetrovsk, urged the paper to print his letter, entitled "I can't forgive myself!": "I think that if a young family man [семьянин] reads my letter, it will be a lesson. So I'm asking you to print it." He introduced himself: "Now I'm a pensioner. I've worked for the good of the people; I've fought. Everything that a citizen of our Fatherland [Отчизни] ought to do. But there's one thing I can't forgive myself for, something for which nobody has judged or punished me." He narrated how he left his wife, Nina, and his son for another woman during the famine of 1931-33. His wife died and his son moved in with his grandmother, but she was killed during the war by German troops and his son spent the war without a family. After the war, K. re-established contact with his son, who told him that he knew all about his affair from his mother's diary. Although K. managed to patch up the relationship, he wrote: "I am ashamed and pained to tears for the thoughtlessness I gave in to; I am ashamed that I didn't help, that I didn't support my friend and the mother of my child when they were in need [в беде]. Don't allow yourself to do the same."[96] K. didn't strictly provide an answer to the IOM's questions, but he did, in a broader sense, respond to them by unburdening himself of his sorrow over his past infidelities. Indeed, he saw his story as useful and instructive for Soviet youth.

A letter signed by seven students from the Kuban "Red Army" Medical Institute in Krasnodar indicated another use for the IOM. They wrote "PLEASE HELP!" at the top of the page, and detailed the marital infidelities of three members of staff. The students called on the paper to "help us get rid of [избавиться] such educators. Please understand that when we look at such people our lives seem foul and vulgar, and we want to look at the shining, happy, and joyful future".[97] Whether the accusations were true or not is unclear, but it

[96] HIA, Box 2, Folder 6, Letter 8184. All subsequent references to letters from this collection are from this box and folder. Correspondent's name changed to protect anonymity.
[97] Letter 11600.

is evident that the IOM's survey provided an opportunity for students to denounce unpopular teachers.

'Betti', a 40-year-old writer from Riazan' *oblast'* praised the Institute, calling it a "new, wise, and genuinely democratic initiative" and suggesting that its founder should be given an award.[98] She contributed a utopian response reminiscent of the early 1920s, in which she denounced the family as a "prison", claimed that it would be changed in revolutionary fashion as the nation approached Communism, and stated her belief that the happiness of the future would make the present day seem unspeakable with the memorable words "We are the manure of history [Мы – навоз истории], preparing the ground for the wonderful future." Like K., Betti invited the paper's editors to print her response, but added: "I hope that it's not just me who expresses an opinion of this kind". Though, judging by the published results, few readers agreed with Betti about the need to abolish the family, the results to the survey showed a diversity of opinions at work in Soviet society, and a plurality of views on how to resolve social problems. Soviet citizens were thus engaged in a form of civic debate, whose parameters were not entirely controlled by the newspaper.[99]

The IOM gave readers a rare opportunity to debate social issues, and the opinions it printed were sometimes at odds with the Party line. Readers were able to 'colour outside the lines' by using the Institute for their own purposes – purposes that diverged from the intentions of its founders. To the extent that journalists attempted to engineer a mass opinion amenable to the regime by circumscribing the frame of debate and stigmatising certain opinions, it limited the potential of the Institute to form a public sphere. At the same time, the Institute implicitly endorsed the right to possess an opinion and the right to differ from others. By publicising the results, it suggested that Soviet public opinion was less like the purposeful, educated *obshchestvennost'* that it had always depicted, and something more diverse and divided.

---

[98] Letter 8015.
[99] B. Grushin, "Poeziia' i 'proza' semeinoi zhizni' KP 9/7/64, 4.

4 1964-1968: Endgame

The idea of the IOM as a scientifically-oriented research institute would have come as a shock to those who studied the Institute's first two surveys. Those had been relatively small-scale undertakings (n=1000 and n=1399) and, both in survey design and in calculation and evaluation of results, they exhibited a slightly home-made quality. The first survey was self-selecting; included fifty per cent more men than women; and was not weighted to the population as a whole.[100] Party and Komsomol leaders, whose instincts were not entirely geared towards scientific neutrality, were involved in the data collection, and in Gaivoron in Ukraine, the Party Secretary, seeing that some responses were not "as required" tore them up. The shortfall was made up by interviewing more individuals in Pskov.[101] The second survey was conducted through questionnaires handed out by the conductor on trains departing from Moscow. This survey, on quality of life, did at least pay lip service to modelling the nation as a whole (the thinking was that, since trains were heading in all directions, the individuals travelling on them would be from a wide range of demographic groups). However, as critics pointed out, the sample inevitably over-represented Muscovites, and peasants and rural inhabitants were rarely found in Moscow – and especially not at a busy work period during the summer.[102]

With its next survey on youth, the Institute introduced an innovation that characterised subsequent activities. The front-page questionnaire provided a simple means for data collection, and had the additional benefit of eliminating many of its costs. The attraction was all the greater because of the enormous number of responses: the IOM interviewed 1000 individuals for its survey on war; it managed more than 20,000 for the one on youth.[103] This was impressive by any measure, and especially when one considers that the French IFOP's 1957 survey on French youth, despite greater publicity, garnered fewer than 15,000

[100] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, pp.113-115.
[101] Ibid., p.75.
[102] Weinberg, *Sociology in SU*, pp.96-99.
[103] Only 17,466 were analysed, the rest disqualified for being over the age of 30, or for other reasons, including being written in the form of poetry.

responses.[104] It also increased greatly the number of letters the paper received, which was considered by the regime to be a measure of a paper's effectiveness. With every response received, the paper became 'objectively' better in the eyes of the Agit-prop bean counters.

However, there were costs to such an approach. The IOM's surveys were now drawn from a self-selecting group of readers – a form of sampling which delivered notoriously unreliable results. Studies of the corpus of letter-writers to KP conducted by IOM staff concluded that they were unrepresentative of the paper's readership as a whole, and this very likely extended to the respondents to the IOM's own surveys. For Russian historian Nikolai Mitrokhin, the presence of such a sample was the "Achilles' heel" of the IOM's work.[105] Readers themselves pointed this out. "The trouble is that it's mainly leading youths who take part in discussions, but there is a backward [отсталая] section of young people who don't read newspapers and don't take part in any discussions and don't express their opinions," wrote an economist from Lipetsk.[106] Nevertheless, it should be noted that those methodological flaws may have amplified 'positive' responses, and thus aided newspaper propaganda.

A second main drawback of the Institute's new methodology was that the high number of respondents threatened to overwhelm the IOM's resources. Seventeen thousand replies was seventeen times more than the Institute's previous surveys, but the IOM had only three staff members to read, analyse, and tabulate them. As we saw in the second section, the Institute was criticised for the amount of time it took to print survey conclusions. For the youth survey, for example, the original *anketa* was printed in January 1961 but its conclusions were ready for publication only in July; the results of a survey on free time would take three years.

The contradiction between the desire for quick results and the needs of academic research only increased between 1962 and 1966, when Grushin was

---

[104] Françoise Giroud, *Nouvelle Vague: Portraits de la jeunesse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p.23.
[105] Nikolai Mitrokhin. 'Zametki o sovetskoi sotsiologii (po prochtenii knigi Borisa Firsova)' *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 98 (2009): 118-119. My thanks to Prof. Stephen Lovell for alerting me to this reference.
[106] HIA, Box 1, Folder 2.

seconded to Prague to work at the journal *Problemy mira i sotsializma* under the liberal stewardship of Aleksei Rumiantsev (briefly to become Editor of *Pravda*, and later the President of the Academy of Sciences).[107] Although Grushin continued to run the paper from Prague, the secondment removed him from the everyday workings of the paper. While at the journal, Grushin made intellectual friendships with leading scholars, organised conferences, and enjoyed greater academic freedom than he had in Moscow. Between 1960 and his departure, Grushin had been both journalist-propagandist and sociologist-academic, but after his trip abroad, his work was far more sober. It should be borne in mind that Grushin came to KP only by accident, having found his philosophical vocation blocked as a result of his suspect intellectual friendships.[108] One likely interpretation – supported by his subsequent career path – is that although Grushin took newspaper work seriously, he never renounced his original academic ambitions.

In Grushin's absence, resentment about the IOM's work bubbled to the surface. At an editorial meeting in April 1963, Sof'ia Finger, one of the paper's senior figures and head of the paper's Party Organisation, read colleagues a reader's letter entitled "Aren't there too many questionnaires?" "Isn't there anything else to write about?" the letter asked, adding that the paper "up to now has been (note: has *been*) one of the best. But now it's started to decline. I don't know how to explain it. But it's become bureaucratised. Because the questionnaires are dreamt up by none other than a bureaucrat. But *Komsomolka* is a youth newspaper and the fewer questionnaires the better."[109] For Finger, the letter provided proof that the paper was merely reflecting public opinion and not doing enough to mould it: "We ask [questions] too often, but we need to give answers ourselves significantly more often, and, most importantly, to give food for thought, so that the reader thinks, discovers new horizons, and

[107] Grushin, 'Gor'kii vkus', pp.211-214.
[108] Boris Grushin, 'Ne na tekh napali!' in *Bol'she, chem gazeta*, p.45.
[109] 22/4/63, d.342, l.16.

goes from strength to strength".[110] For Vladimir Razumnevich, meanwhile, the paper was being turned into a "dry organ of accounting".[111]

Finger's criticisms were sufficiently robust for the IOM's Valentin Chikin to feel the need to defend its work. He reminded the collective that the IOM had only one member of staff to process questionnaires, and predicted – with remarkable accuracy, as it turned out – that to process the thirteen thousand questionnaires received for the free time survey would require *644 working days*. He spoke of the enormous social importance of the Institute's survey on free time, and read out a letter from a young man in Cheliabinsk who claimed that a total absence of leisure facilities had driven both him and his colleagues to drink, with the result that many had had brushes with the penal system.[112] Chikin thus argued that the gathering of such data was in the public interest, for it provided valuable information on social problems that might otherwise have gone unreported. He also defended the IOM on pragmatic grounds. He reminded his audience that the Institute brought in an enormous number of letters: 28,336 in 1961, 46,700 in 1962, and 20,000 in the first three months of 1963, representing between 17 and 22 per cent of the total postbag of the newspaper. But the real ace in his hand was the fact that research into free time had been commissioned by the party's Central Committee.

From humble beginnings, the Institute was now called upon to provide research for the regime. This decisive moment was to dictate the IOM's direction for the remainder of its existence. Following the survey on free time, subsequent surveys were to concentrate on customer service, the Komsomol, child and teenage crime, the national anthem, elections in industry, and economic reform. Save for its final survey in 1967-68, a desperate attempt to return to favour with the collective in order to keep the IOM open, the free-wheeling, propaganda-friendly days of the Institute were gone. Each of the Institute's subsequent surveys was focused on a particular social issue and most

[110] Ibid., l.16.
[111] Ibid., l.21.
[112] Ibid., ll.19-20.

were commissioned by a branch of the ruling apparatus, from the Central Committee to the KGB.

Editor Iurii Voronov spoke of the importance of the Institute gaining *"gosudarstvennost'"* [statehood], and pointed out that its work had been evaluated positively by Leonid Il'ichev at the Ideological Commission, that the First Secretary of the Komsomol, Sergei Pavlov, had referred positively to it, and that it was cited in the Party's theoretical journal *Kommunist*.[113] If working in the Soviet press sometimes seemed like a battle between the authorities and journalists, then having the IOM as part of the establishment clearly represented a sort of insurance – an example of patronage that could be wheeled out when necessary. It is striking nevertheless that the Institute had to rely on that approval, rather than the strength of its material, to shore up its support.

Between 1963 and 1966, the ties linking the IOM and the Party tightened, possibly because of the increased prominence of Grushin nationally, but also because he was the only figure conducting polling at the time. The Institute became a kind of sandbox for the regime's tentative experiments in using social data to govern society. Crossing the boundary between Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, two surveys conducted in late 1964, "Let's design" and "A new product needs a name", were dismissed by Grushin as transparent attempts to attract reader responses to bulk up the size of the postbag before the end of the year.[114] One asked readers to answer questions about the design of televisions and record players; the other invited them to propose names for these new products. In both cases, prizes were offered. Though these surveys were closer to market research than sociology, they nevertheless showed which way the wind was blowing: only a few months later, the regime announced the opening of the nation's first ever market research institute.[115]

The Institute's links with the Party could also be seen as exerting a democratising effect on the nation's governance. Even from the Institute's earliest surveys (such as the questionnaire on living standards) government

---

[113] Ibid., l.30.
[114] Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.17 n.1.
[115] Little is known about the work of the Institute, which existed for less than a year.

officials had been asked to comment on the points that the public had made. If this early attempt to link the public and their politicians was not especially successful (all three ministers resorted to speechifying, rather than responding directly to social issues), then later attempts would be more far-reaching.[116] Amongst the articles produced for the "Are you being served well?" survey of 1964 was a series of interviews with the Minister of Trade, the Minister of Light Industry, and the Minister of Transport and Highways. Here, the tone was far more combative:

> **IOM** 66% of participants in the survey are complaining about the fact that our everyday life is aggravated by queues. What do you have planned for the coming year to eradicate the "tailed monstrosity" [«хвостатого чудовища»]?
> **A.I. Struev** I have to admit to a problem. To promise a complete, as you put it "eradication" of queues in the coming year would be silly. Queues are produced for a number of reasons. And one of the main ones is that production of a number of products has not kept up with the rising income of the Soviet people …[117]

And the questions continued, each citing a survey figure, each pointing to dissatisfaction amongst the Soviet citizenry about the state of retail and transport. Needless to say, such questions did not touch the highest levels of political power. They were, however, a step forward for the evolution of Soviet public opinion. Although in the post-Stalin period ministers were sometimes invited to discuss their work on the pages of KP, the connection to the IOM was crucial. Politicians now had to respond to the views of the public they ostensibly served, to explain their policies and admit errors.[118] They were being held accountable.

By the beginning of 1966, the links between the IOM and the Party apparatus were stronger than ever. The Institute was beginning to win commissions from the government, and there was now no need to fight the battles of the past about whether empirical research had a right to exist. But it was equally clear that the IOM was losing support among sections of the editorial collective. Only the opposition of Mikhail Suslov prevented him from

---

[116] 'Radostnye itogi, tsennye predlozheniia' KP 8/10/60, 1-2.
[117] A.I. Struev '10 voprosov o prilavke' KP 14/12/65. 1.
[118] See also N. Shelomov, 'Industriia otdykha' KP 27/9/66, 2.

relocating the Institute to *Pravda*, where his former editor in Prague, Aleksei Rumiantsev, was now editor.[119] Having failed in this bid, Grushin set about altering the IOM's institutional ties to KP in a bid to gain some security. The Institute became independent of the Department of Propaganda, and was split into two sections. A 'science' section, headed by Grushin, dealt with survey design, data collection, and analysis, and a 'newspaper' section, headed by Ervant Grigor'iants, concentrated on producing articles. It received funds from KP's budget, but also financed itself through income derived from work for external agencies, such as ministries.[120] As Figure 4 (page 233) shows, seven of the nine surveys undertaken after Grushin's return were projects of this type.

However, it appears that this did little to improve the dearth of newspaper material. Eleven of the twelve surveys conducted before 1966 produced articles, but only five of the eleven produced afterwards bore similar fruit (and two of those only a single article). While those early surveys had attracted enthusiastic comments from the paper's editorial staff, the IOM's later work was often passed over in silence. Nevertheless, the IOM still brought a large volume of postal traffic, and the prestige that attended the Institute's patronage by the regime was no small matter. It therefore made sense for KP's editor, Boris Pankin to continue to offer his support – indeed, he was one of the driving forces behind granting the IOM its autonomy.[121]

In Spring 1966, the prospects for the Institute looked rosy. In April of that year, Brezhnev endorsed the conducting of concrete research into social problems, and announced the opening of a major research institute to that end.[122] At the same time, the IOM was conducting its first survey as an independent organisation, "Komsomols on the Komsomol", which, although not commissioned by the organisation, was prepared in close collaboration with it. The survey, which gauged members' opinions on their organisation delivered desperately negative results. Barely a quarter of respondents thought that the Komsomol determined their tasks in life, and only a third thought that the

[119] Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.21 n.1.
[120] Ibid.. 21-22. On the IOM's finances p.423.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Mespoulet, 70.

organisation dealt with suggestions adequately. Almost three quarters of respondents claimed that the Komsomol was of no help to them in achieving their goals in life, while more than half felt that changes to admissions procedures were required.[123] In many ways, the survey was a form of self-criticism of the sort we encountered in Chapter 1, and the Komsomol's reaction to the survey underlined this. So incendiary were these almost entirely negative results that they remained unpublished for thirty-five years. In Grushin's account, the editors of KP, fearing potential prosecution from the KGB, attempted to destroy the survey data, which were apparently rescued by IOM employee Iakob Kapeliush in a daring rescue from the Pravda publishing complex.[124]

Even without publication of the results, the paper still managed to convey a sense of the public mood by printing a collection of readers' responses in late April. Even though these responses were accented towards the positive, they nevertheless provided a window onto the organisation's problems. One 26-year-old engineer-constructor from Moscow complained that "The main principle in the organisation is numbers [массовость] and nothing more ... As a result a dumb little seventeen year-old girl and a twenty year-old parent turn up in the same organisation. They don't have any of the same interests, both are politically illiterate. What unites us? We all pay our membership fees on time."[125] The postscript to the article gravely admitted "… the arguments mentioned above raise many serious problems connected with the life of today's Komsomol" without offering a crumb of solace.[126] Most likely, it was as much for this article, as much as for the survey itself, that Grushin and the paper found themselves under fire.

Seen in retrospect, it appears that the survey's main sin was to have been published in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was the wrong place, because, as the leading Komsomol newspaper, KP should have been publishing ritualised celebrations. It was the wrong time, because it came only months

[123] For full details see Grushin, *Brezhnev*, pp.59-135.
[124] Ibid., pp.30-31.
[125] 'Komsomol'tsy o komsomole' KP 26/4/66, 2.
[126] Ibid.

after Voronov's sacking for the Sakhnin affair. And, to add insult to injury, the survey was commissioned in the run-up to the Komsomol's Fifteenth Congress. Narrated in this way, the failure of the Komsomol survey seems pre-ordained. But Pankin nor Grushin were seasoned tyros – they knew the way the press worked. Why, then, had they made such a grave error?

In conducting this research, Grushin and Pankin were responding to signals from the Komsomol. In June 1965, the First Secretary of the Komsomol, Sergei Pavlov, stated that Komsomol officials "need to know the true opinions of youth on concrete questions, to construct our work on the basis of their interests, desires, and demands …. Without this there is subjectivism, haphazardness [безсистемность], rushing from one initiative to another, and work "in bursts" [«на прорыв»].[127] Whether by accident or design, his words are strikingly similar to those used by Grushin in his proposal for the "Komsomols on the Komsomol" research:

> Today, we cannot be satisfied with decisions taken by guesswork [«на глазок»], by recommendations born within the four walls of an office. We need to study life deeply and seriously, to study the objective processes that are occurring amongst youth, and on the basis of this study to programmatise all our activity. It is clear that in this work, concrete sociological research into youth problems will play an enormous role.[128]

However, the Komsomol was in the process of changing. Brezhnev claimed that there was a "Komsomol opposition" at work.[129] It was around this time that the Communard movement was ordered to disband. Soon after the Congress, Pavlov (hardly a 'liberal', but at least open to new ideas) was replaced by the "bootlick" (to use Steven Solnick's word) Evgenii Tiazhel'nikov.[130] The mass of research commissioned into "the true opinions of Soviet youth" was effectively ignored, the "Komsomols on the Komsomol" survey included. It could never be said that the Komsomol's governing organs did not know what was wrong with their organisation – the problem was, they would rather not have known.

---

[127] S. Pavlov, 'Raboty komsomola - vroven' s vremenem' KP 16/6/65, 2.
[128] 'K programme …' HIA, Box 3, Folder 27.
[129] Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp.73-75.
[130] Ibid.

The regime had expected the "fanfares" that greeted the survey on Soviet youth five years earlier; when it received an eight-page summary of the results without commentary, it regarded the survey as a "blackening of reality".[131] Two years later, at the Fifth Komsomol Congress, a similar report (not, this time, conducted by the IOM), investigating why Soviet youth had turned to rebellion, was suppressed and bowdlerised.[132] From that point, sociological research would be used to provide "scientific" support for decisions already taken.[133]

However, Grushin's survey was oriented, not towards an open-ended study of members' attitudes, but towards an explanation of Komsomol members' dissatisfaction. He hypothesised that the "vagueness" of the regime's goals was one reason for the rank-and-file's indifference, and predicted that he would find a massive difference in opinion between various socio-professional groups and different age groups.[134] Thus, the intention of the survey was not to unify, but to account for the Komsomol's lack of unity. Moreover, the IOM had abandoned its earlier reliance on questionnaire-based research and self-selecting samples, and now sought to build a stratified sample of the organisation as a whole. Earlier surveys partly derived their positive results from the distortions introduced by utilising a self-selecting sample; this survey ironed out those problems. In order to "orient Komsomol respondents to a conversation that would be as practical and honest as possible, without false pathos" the preamble to the survey was left as "dry" as possible in order not to influence respondents' answers.[135] Thus, Grushin's greater methodological acuity is likely to have amplified the negative cast of the responses.

The controversy over the Komsomol survey was to have profound effects for the Institute's future work. Plans for a regular sociologist's column were cancelled, and, with the paper taking fright after the departure of Voronov, the

---

131 Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.28; Grushin, 'Gor'kii vkus', p.210. For the original report see Grushin to Pavlov, 'Spravka po rezul'tatam anketnogo oprosa 'Komsomol'tsy o komsomole'' HIA, Box 3, Folder 17.
132 Solnick, pp.81-82.
133 Ibid., p.83.
134 'Komsomol'tsy o komsomole: programma issledovaniia (1-i variant)'. HIA, Box 3, Folder 27.
135 Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.59.

IOM's projected series of articles to greet the survey were similarly dropped.[136] However, the scandal did more damage to the IOM's standing at the paper than with the Party. The year following the controversy saw the Institute at its busiest, conducting seven separate surveys, commissioned by a number of different sections of the ruling apparatus. There were two surveys on the KP readership; a study of youth crime for the KGB; another on the national anthem for the Central Committee; and a survey on holidays for a branch of the State Construction agency. Such a record is proof of the remarkable popularity of sociology in the mid- to late-1960s, but also of the lack of organisations that were qualified to carry out such research.

Though the new-found independence of the IOM was a boon for the sociological side of the operation, it still did little to improve the Institute's viability as a *journalistic* undertaking. Naturally enough, the KGB did not allow the results of the survey on youth crime to be disseminated, and the IOM's two in-depth surveys of the KP readership, their results being of more interest to journalists than readers, received only one short article each. That left only the Institute's survey on holidays, which, despite being fairly successful in terms of the quantity of articles it produced, met with a decidedly lukewarm reaction from journalists: "When one reads one letter after another, one comes to the conclusion that nothing new is being said," one journalist complained.[137] And at a *letuchka* of 9 January 1967, the collective rated the Institute's work as unsatisfactory, and "perceived the main root of this lack of success of the 'journalists' [газетчиков] solely in the ill-intentioned actions of the 'sociologists'".[138]

The low point of the Institute at the newspaper coincided with the high point in its relationship with officialdom: the Central Committee's commissioning of a survey on the national anthem in March 1967 (no articles came from the survey). A month later, the IOM frittered this goodwill away, ultimately setting in motion the controversy that forced the Institute's closure.

---

[136] Ibid., p.28.
[137] 5/7/66, d.432, l.4.
[138] Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.26. The transcript of this meeting is not available, so we are relying on Grushin's account of the meeting.

Following on from an article published in September 1966 about an experiment in workers' democracy in Krasnoiarsk, the Institute decided to undertake research into the question.[139] The results suggested widespread support of respondents for elections, not just at grass roots, but *at all levels* of industrial enterprises – a policy that the regime had no intention of supporting. Again, Grushin's motives in carrying the survey out remain obscure. He seems to have possessed a genuine desire to reveal certain truths about Soviet society that contradicted official rhetoric. Pankin was not so foolish as to test the limits, and prevented publication of any material relating to the survey.[140] The damage to the Institute's image at the paper, however, was terminal.

In a bid to stave off the inevitable, Grushin attempted to redress the balance between science and propaganda by trying to return to the good old days of the early 1960s, with a light-hearted survey on parents' reasons for choosing children's names. The survey recalled earlier efforts like the very successful "1000 children on 50 words" survey of 1962, and the youth survey of 1961 – right down to the questionnaire-based, self-selecting survey design. Yet while the latter had attracted more than 17,000 readers, this latter survey barely managed 4000. The reaction from within the collective was even less positive: Aleksei Ivkin tore into the survey's "boring" conclusions.[141] He argued that, while the IOM's previous survey on free time had obtained wide social resonance, this survey would "only make the Department of Letters happy"[142] He continued:

> When in our country sociology was underground, under pressure, then the appearance of such an organisation in our paper played a progressive role. We were the first – that was to our credit. Now, when sociology and social psychology are already in every corner of our lives, the retention of the Institute of Public Opinion at our paper as a scientific organisation just makes you smile, because at the quality and the quantity that the Institute of Public Opinion is working at it all looks unserious and unscientific. We need to close down the Institute. It can't work with such amateurish [кустарными] methods, with such amateurish principles, and with such amateurish equipment – all the more so

[139] Ibid., p.28.
[140] Though the regime still punished the paper in 1969, a year after the closure of the IOM (Grushin, *Brezhnev*, pp.28-29 n.3).
[141] 8/1/68, d.470, l.13.
[142] Ibid.

> when you compare the level of sociological research in the West with ours, where things are done on a large scale. When you look at it like that, the IOM looks like a dilettante.[143]

The IOM's attempts to be less "amateurish" and create viable works of sociology had ended in acrimony. But now Grushin's attempts to turn the clock back to the Institute's propaganda-friendly glory days were mocked. Ivkin's comments encapsulate Grushin's failure to navigate between the conflicting demands of KP and social science. The collision seemed ever more inevitable the longer Grushin maintained the illusion that the IOM could continue to undertake social research at a large newspaper without paying the piper. The IOM was expensive; it produced precious little material; and it often brought problems from the Party – even though it ostensibly had its political support. Pankin's decision to close the Institute, notwithstanding Grushin's later criticisms of the short-sightedness of his former Editor and supporter, was unlikely to have been a difficult one.[144]

However, as Ivkin's comments hinted, the situation for sociology was changing. Party support for sociology occasioned the opening of an Institute of Concrete Social Research (IKSI) at the Academy of Sciences in 1968, followed in 1969 by the Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (TsIOM), headed by Grushin. There, he extended his IOM research into socially uncharted territory, with the Centre surveying areas such as drunkenness, political education, the work of local party organs, physical culture, and personal finance. After the IOM gained administrative independence, forty-two different institutes and ministries made enquiries to the TsIOM.[145] Indicative of the TsIOM's influence was the fact that the most persistent enquirers were at the very top of the state hierarchy: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Culture.[146]

It is hard to escape the conclusion that it made more sense for Grushin to work at the Academy of Sciences. However, after the IOM left KP, results were limited to a narrow, specialist circle, without press publicity. As sociologist

---

[143] Ibid.
[144] Grushin, *Brezhnev*, p.30; 'Gor'kii vkus', p.210.
[145] Grushin, *Brezhnev*, pp.433-434.
[146] Ibid.

Vladimir Shlapentokh has suggested, press coverage of polls has a "magnifying" effect. The presence of results in a national forum "enhances their critical orientation" among the general public.[147] It was precisely this effect that the regime feared. Empirical sociology was no longer hounded on a theoretical level (though it never sat entirely comfortably with historical materialism), but its wider public resonance remained problematic. Away from KP, Grushin's surveys could no longer create a new kind of public opinion, but instead became a tool for rational-bureaucratic governance.[148] The time for experiments had passed; an era of scientific managerialism was dawning.

But the growing importance of sociology to the Soviet leadership brought enhanced status for sociologists who, for a time, dined at the top table with the Soviet elite. Sociologists who had once been under attack now found themselves invited to Central Committee meetings; they were frequently asked to participate in seminars, lectures and conferences; their work appeared in the most prestigious publications.[149] Grushin himself was asked to head a large research project into mass media, which ran for six years from 1967 to 1973. However, sociologists' position was subject to the vagaries of high politics. Even before the opening of the IKSI, the Siniavskii-Daniel' trial showed the Party's fear of ideological ferment amongst the intelligentsia. A year later, Fedor Burlatskii, who would become Deputy Head of the ISKI, was fired from *Pravda* after he co-authored an article in KP with Len Karpinskii, another sociologist, which spoke out against theatre censorship.[150]

After the Prague Spring, the situation grew graver still. A scandal over the lack of reverence shown to Marxism in Iurii Levada's lectures was followed by attacks on other prominent scholars.[151] The liberal Aleksei Rumiantsev was removed from the leadership of the Institute, to be replaced by Mikhail Rutkevich, who replaced prominent academics with ideologues one by one. By

---

147 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *The Politics of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp.109-110.
148 Mespoulet, 72.
149 Shlapentokh, *Politics*, p.38.
150 F. Burlatskii, L. Karpinskii, 'Na puti k prem'ere' KP 30/6/67, 4. KP was forced to print a retraction: 'The Artist's Party Spirit' KP 8/7/67, 2, reprinted in CDSP 19/27 (1967), 15-17.
151 Mespoulet, 76-77.

1972, "studies of public opinion" was one item on a long list of subjects proscribed for publication.[152] Grushin jumped before being pushed, emigrating to Prague in 1974. Only under Gorbachev, when sociology once again became part of a reformist agenda, was he able to return to Moscow and his work on public opinion.

5 Doublethink?

In a 2009 review of sociologist Boris Firsov's memoirs, *Raznomyslie* [Different Views], the historian Nikolai Mitrokhin attacked the heroic *shestidesiatniki* stance of the book's author, claiming that a more apt term would be 'doublethink'.[153] His harsh words extended to Grushin's work at the IOM, which he saw as merely reflecting the views of an activist elite. Grushin was not averse to doing some of his own self-mythology:

> [Our press] undermined the system. And this happened on a massive scale. On the whole, with the exception of some brazen toadies, who picked the crumbs after the feast and sold themselves in plain view, all the rest worked on undermining.[154]

Grushin knew better than anyone how "undermining" was often a long way from journalists' minds. Though he claimed that the IOM provided a means for training citizens in the values of civil society, as we have seen from the words of his colleague, Valentin Chikin, the IOM was also a tool for creating model Communist citizens.[155] For this reason, Mitrokhin's iconoclastic demolishing of *shestidesiatniki* certainties is welcome. But, by calling into question the ultimate impact of Firsov and Grushin's work, Mitrokhin raises important questions about the way historians should view the work of those, such as journalists and sociologists, who were forced into compromises to resurrect their profession. 'Doublethink', if that is what it was, would suggest that they had fooled

[152] Ibid., 83.
[153] Mitrokhin, 120.
[154] Grushin, 'IOM – otdel KP', p.63.
[155] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, pp.53-54.

themselves into thinking they were changing society, when, in fact, they were contributing to the perpetuation of the *status quo*.

The IOM came from both inside and outside the ruling apparatus, and it both sought both social change and social continuity. For Mitrokhin, it could not be considered a serious scientific institute, since its orientation towards self-selecting samples meant that its results were just echoes of the Party's own voice.[156] True enough, although later surveys ironed out these flaws. Yet even when the sampling was unsound, surveys were seen by readers as an opportunity to air their views, and on occasion forced government ministers to respond to the voice of the public. Despite attempts to demonstrate social unanimity, the fracturing of the ideological certainties was real.[157]

And, for all the talk of 'doublethink', Grushin was brave: his daring in conducting his surveys on the Komsomol and on elections in production cannot be explained by any desire to please the regime: transcripts show that Grushin's defence of the liberal sociologist Iurii Levada, whose course of lectures on sociology were denounced as deviating from Party principles, put him in a minority of one.[158] Yet, one instinctively feels that arguing in such terms is a dangerous game, somehow damaging to historical understanding. It turns history into a test of bravery (as if dissidence was the only acceptable course of action) and makes historians into judges, rather than analysts of the past.

Far better to be more measured in one's judgements: the IOM stands as a testimony to the power of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* to effect change in public life; it also exposes its limitations. The ease with which Grushin was able to open the Institute and rapidly turn it into an organisation of national importance illustrates how 'amateurs' could exploit the loosening of everyday control over society to create something completely new within the cultural space of the newspaper. However, the reaction of a significant section of its staff to the Institute's later work, and its use as a tool for forging normative citizens, illustrates the limitations of such institutionalised spaces in Soviet conditions.

---

[156] Ibid., pp.18-19.
[157] On this point see also Rutkevich, p.240.
[158] V.E. Kozlovskii and Iu. A. Sychev, 'Obsuzhdenie kursa lektsii Iu.A. Levady po sotsiologii' *Filosofskie nauki* 3 (1970), 178-85.

Looking back on the work of the Institute, Grushin claimed that it was called upon to perform two functions: firstly, to allow a space for free expression of opinions; secondly, to clear a space for this public opinion in civil society by "forming public opinion [общественность], raising the level of its self-consciousness, enabling links with political instances, including institutions with the power to take decisions".[159] This chapter has suggested that the IOM performed other functions, rather less in tune with the values of post-Communism. But contradiction is not doublethink. These were simply the conditions of the period, and they made the Institute into what it was: part success and part failure.

[159] Grushin, *Khrushchev*, p.53.

FIGURE 4: List of Surveys Undertaken by the IOM

NAME OF SURVEY (entries in bold signify commissioned research)	DATE (mth/yr)	n=	METHODOLOGY	ARTICLES		
				First	Last	Total[160]
Will Humanity Succeed in Averting War?	5/60	1000	Interviews	5/60	5/60	1
Quality of Life	8-9/60	1399	Questionnaire	10/60	10/60	3
Opinions of Soviet Youth	1-3/61	17466 + 100	Questionnaire	1/61	7/61	7
Brigades of Communist Labour	**8-11/61**	**367 + 1295**	**Questionnaire**	**8/61**	**12/62**	**5**
Problems of the Soviet Family	12/61-62	12104	Questionnaire	12/61	12/62	5
1000 Children on 50 Words	1-2/62	1000	Questionnaire	8/64	8/64	1
In Whose Name Do You Study?	5-9/62	1300	Questionnaire	9/62	9/62	1
To Mars … With What?	3-4/63	6425	Questionnaire	3/63	10/63	7
Free Time	**1-11/63**	**2730 + 10392**	**Questionnaire**	**1/63**	**2/66**	**16**
An Invention Needs a Name	**10-12/64**	**46000**	**Competition**	**11/64**	**11/64**	**2**
Let's Plan!	**6-7/64**	**14150**	**Competition**	**7/64**	**10/64**	**1**
Customer Service	**11-12/64**	**6127**	**Questionnaire**	**12/64**	**1/66**	**8**
Free Time of Senior High School Students	**1965**	**1000**	**Questionnaire**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**0**
Komsomols on the Komsomol	3-4/66	3101	Interviews	4/66	9/66	3
Child and Teenage crime	**3-4/66**	**643**	**Interviews**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**0**
Vacations: How to spend them?	**6-7/66**	**5765+ 6235+ 4000**	**Questionnaire, interviews**	**6/66**	**11/66**	**6**
Readers on Themselves and on the Paper	**10-12/66**	**18000**	**Questionnaire**	**10/66**	**10/66**	**1**
Letters to KP and their Authors	**2-7/67**	**421**	**Interviews**	**3/68**	**3/68**	**1**
The National Anthem	**3/67**	**3500**	**Interviews**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**0**
The Problem of Elections in Industry	**4/67**	**900**	**Interviews**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**0**
The Population and Economic Reforms	**5/67**	**1000**	**Interviews**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**0**
Five Questions to Mums and Dads	9-10/67	> 4000	Questionnaire	9/67	12/67	3
TOTAL		**170,841**				**71**

[160] Excluding the printing of blank questionnaires.

CHAPTER 5 | **"The reader is not an icon": from the Reader-citizen to the Reader-consumer**

If *Komsomol'skaia pravda* were a person, what sort of person would it be? In March 1965, KP journalist Valerii Kondakov mused aloud to colleagues on this question. It "would be extremely interesting, very knowledgeable, and able to examine many problems of society. One would want to chat with such a person – a good friend who you meet every morning. But, at the same time, this is an extremely serious person, who rarely smiles or jokes. Their head is filled with the great and serious problems of life, and they sometimes don't notice what is happening around them, and what is bothering every reader." The problem with this 'friend', argued Kondakov, was that they "like to talk for a very long time", with their 'conversation' sometimes going on for "ten-or-more pages".[1] Such talkativeness tried readers' friendship.

Kondakov's comments on the paper's image illustrate how, in a climate of growing competition, journalists felt an increasing pressure to be liked.[2] *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had a rather complex personality. It was the sort of friend who might be a little prissy and demanding, but was also reliable and upstanding. But it was also neurotically trying to be someone else: a chatty and entertaining interlocutor who automatically won everyone's friendship. The conflict between the two roles is at the heart of this chapter.

Forging links with the reader was at the very heart of the Soviet press as a cultural project. Newspapers were encouraged to print and respond to readers' correspondence and journalists were to learn from readers and draw on their wealth of real-world experience. Readers were founts of knowledge, but they were imperfect. Under Khrushchev, journalists saw their task as being to bring into being a modern, civic-minded subject – the opposite of the

[1] 25/3/65, d.382, l.40.
[2] On the reader-journalist 'friendship' see 'To Our Readers', *Izvestiia* 5/1/65, 1, translated in CDSP 17/1, 1965, 30.

obedient, unimaginative Stalinist individual.[3] Journalists at KP provided new ways for readers to exercise their rights as citizens, but many journalists resisted attempts to give publicity to individuals whose utterances lay outside 'cultured' limits.

This focus on citizenship was put under stress after Khrushchev's ouster – partly because of a natural evolution of journalistic attitudes, but also as a direct effect of political decisions. The Brezhnev leadership was wary of grass roots initiatives to remodel society and forced journalists to neuter their civic activism. But it also placed enormous faith in the modernising potential of economic reform and social science. Profit motives were increasingly seen as a panacea for the country's ills, which led to the abolition of circulation limits in late-1964. Exposing journalists to the vicissitudes of reader preference forced the press to pay more attention to their audience's interests, intensified competition between newspapers, and necessitated a more prominent role for sociological research. This forced a role reversal in the teacher-pupil relationship that had previously characterised interactions between journalists and readers. By 1968, the educational role of the press, which assumed that journalists possessed superior knowledge to readers, was increasingly being squeezed out in favour of the relatively novel requirement that newspapers should cater to readers' tastes, which implied that 'the customer is always right'.

1 The Audience Before the Twentieth Party Congress

The audience held an ambiguous place within Soviet discourse.[4] The paternalistic aims of Bolshevik culture stressed education and agitation: audiences were to learn from producers and, in so doing, come to consciousness

[3] Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Soviet Person after Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005)

[4] There exists no like-for-like translation of the word 'audience' into Russian. The nearest cognate, публика, symbolised the bourgeois public, and alternatives like круг читателей ["circle of readers"] were not used. The audience was referred to as читатели [readers] or наши читатели [our readers]. Also common was referring to наш читатель [our reader]. I use 'audiences' or 'readers' to refer to newspaper readerships, but when translating journalists terms, I use journalists' own terms.

as revolutionary subjects.[5] But the masses were simultaneously seen as the source of authentic knowledge, as being closer to everyday life than the intellectual elite. Audiences became producers through a burgeoning worker-peasant correspondent network which was to bring the world of the toiling masses to a wider audience, while workers were encouraged by Gor'kii to write in their own voice about their everyday travails.[6] The common refrain to writers and artists who had become divorced from the people was to re-educate themselves by learning from workers and peasants.[7] But following the 'Great Break', authorities' attitudes to both audiences and producers changed. The *proletkul't* experiments of the 1920s were curtailed, and cultural production was professionalised – a development exemplified by the sidelining of the worker-peasant correspondent movement.[8] Cultural products now projected a singular, positive, vision of reality, leaving little room for artistic experimentation. Katerina Clark uses the term "ritual" to describe the inner workings of the Soviet novel; Jeffrey Brooks calls this new public culture both a "ritual" and a "performance", while Evgeny Dobrenko calls Socialist Realism a machine for producing Soviet reality.[9] The implication of such metaphors is that 'real life' was gradually ritualised, aestheticised, or mass manufactured.[10] Soviet audiences, were, by implication, disenfranchised by this loss of reality.

Empirical data with which to test this is difficult to come by, since the readership studies which had produced a wealth of data on Soviet audiences in the 1920s disappeared in the 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 4). However, the

---

[5] Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[6] Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*. Trans. Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[7] Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary Culture*, Trans. Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[8] Michael S. Gorham, 'Tongue-Tied Writers: The *Rabsel'kor* Movement and the Voice of the "New Intelligentsia" in Early Soviet Russia', *Russian Review* 55/3 (July 1996), 412-429.

[9] Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism.* Trans. Jesse M. Savage (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Katerina Clark. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual. Third Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[10] For this reason, Dobrenko's conception of Soviet reality has been criticised for failing to understand its nature: Petre Petrov, 'The Industry of Truing: Socialist Realism, Reality, Realization' *Slavic Review* 70/4 (2011), 873-892.

'Harvard Study on the Soviet Social System', an American study of the attitudes of émigrés to the Soviet system, though far from a representative sample, delivers an insight into readers' opinions on the press of the 1930s and 1940s.[11]

One young reader said that KP was dry and uninteresting, and added that "in general, [newspapers] were regarded with boredom".[12] A 29-year-old spoke of reading KP "once in a while", but only when he had "nothing else to do".[13] A former journalist claimed that most readers only looked at foreign news and sensational news items, such as those on accidents "… otherwise there were only letters to Stalin, letters about Stakhanovism, things that people knew and were tired of hearing".[14] A third agreed that: "[The newspapers] were very boring. They were always about the marvellous achievements of the regime but meanwhile we were living so miserably".[15]

These comments suggest that catering to the tastes of the readership was not a priority. Instead, the press focused on transmitting instructions to activists.[16] One military political leader [политрук] stated that "[m]ost of the things in the newspapers were always the same, so you did not have to read too much to know what the papers said. However, I had to use materials from the newspapers for my work in addition to the instructions which I received".[17] An engineer and agitator recalled a situation where he asked for more information for propaganda work, only to be told that "everything of any importance is printed in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*."[18] The effect of using the newspaper as an agitator's notebook led to reader dissatisfaction, but it made sense. The Stalinist leadership saw enemies both internal and external as threatening the Soviet

[11] On the Harvard Study, see Alex Inkeles, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950); Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, Clyde Kluckhorn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).
[12] Harvard Study on the Soviet Social System (henceforth HS). Schedule A, Volume 34, Case 420 (Female, 25)
[13] HS. A 16/314 (Male, 29)
[14] HS. A 23/470 (Male, 37)
[15] HS. A 8/10 (Female 25)
[16] Brooks, *Thank You*; Matthew Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp.174-181.
[17] HP. A 8/10 (Male, 33)
[18] HP. A 31/445 (Male, 32)

Union's existence.[19] The flow of information was therefore a military priority and it was therefore natural for elites to save paper by rationing information to the most essential material.[20] Repetition might seem to be a waste of paper, but it ensured that essential messages reached their intended audience.[21]

This shift in focus reflected changing notions of citizenship. The romantic belief in the natural creativity of workers, had allowed the non-professional a space for self-expression. But now that the audience's role was passive, this was no longer necessary. Instead, citizenship became a question of participating and observing a series of rituals and ceremonies.[22] The Second World War altered this situation fundamentally. In a period of total mobilisation, Soviet authorities were forced to widen their appeal to the masses. Writers like Il'ia Erenburg proclaimed the need to "address readers in their own voices", and he was joined by literary figures such as Konstantin Simonov, Vasilii Grossman, and Aleksei Tolstoi.[23] These writers realigned the relationship between journalist and audience, using the pronoun "we" as a way of sharing suffering and joy with readers.[24] Onto the pages of the press came stories, not just of public heroism, but also tales of domestic life and personal relationships.[25]

Although the Stalin cult had begun to make its reappearance by the end of the war, these changes were lasting, with turn towards questions of individual morality continuing into the 1940s and early-1950s.[26] Certainly, such discussions always remained within safe parameters, but their presence is illustrative of a shift from the party rank-and-file to the general reader. In June 1951, KP's Boris Strel'nikov said of a propaganda article: "Of course, each of us

---

[19] David L. Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity (1917-1941)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.175-183.
[20] On newsprint shortages, see Kenez, pp.45-49.
[21] HP. A 30/644 (Female, 30); HP. A 6/67 (Male, 50); HP. B 6/606 (Male, 41).
[22] Serhy Yekelchik, 'The Civic Duty to Hate: Stalinist Citizenship as Political Practice and Civic Emotion (Kiev, 1943–53)' *Kritika* 7/3 (2006), 529-556.
[23] Brooks, p.167.
[24] Ibid., p.180.
[25] Ibid., pp.180-184.
[26] 'Tekst vystupleniia glavnogo redaktora gazety "Komsomol'skaia pravda" tov. D. Goriunov v sviazi s 25-letiem gazety', May 1950, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.99, l.10; Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.250-291.

has asked the question: for whom are we putting out the paper, for the wide mass reader [для широкого массового читателя], or just for the Komsomol *aktiv*?" He argued that the paper needed to move beyond the latter: "Propagandists don't need this article, because propagandists can read Comrade Stalin's speech themselves." He claimed that such articles needed to become more enticing to the general reader.[27]

Strel'nikov's frustration was shared by other journalists, who urged the paper to do more to interest readers.[28] In early 1952 the paper's Party Organisation admitted that "Much of what we print on the pages of our paper does not satisfy our readers … The pages of our paper are often filled with boring, grey material" and it suggested that the paper find out more about the desires of readers: "We will be able to more clearly imagine the demands of young people, what they demand from the paper. Readers' criticism will help us to work better".[29] It is striking how journalists no longer conceived of readers as passive observers of proceedings, but as individuals whose interest needed to be roused. Indeed, journalists often spoke of their culpability: "We are guilty before our readers," said Deputy Editor Aleksandr Pliusch, while Popov, who had been told by students that his paper's coverage was too similar to *Pravda*'s, recalled: "I blushed, I had nothing to answer".[30] This suggests that the seeds of a public service orientation already existed under Stalin. But although readers' needs were acknowledged, they remained unsatisfied, most likely because there was a fear of overstepping the limits of acceptable discussion in a period when punishments for misconduct were severe. All the same, their comments show how the seeds of the Khrushchev-era reconstruction of journalism were sown in the late Stalin period – even if such a shift was not always evident on the page.

---

[27] 25/6/51, d.107, ll.25-26.
[28] Closed Party Meeting, 23/1/50, d.25, ll.1, 4; Party Meeting, 26/1/51, d.26, ll.4-5; 25/6/51, d.107, l.123; 12/11/51, d.112, ll. 69, 79, 83, 85; See also *Izvestiia letuchka*, 3/3/52, GARF, f.R1244, op.1, d.132, ll.1-34.
[29] 'Otchetnyi doklad partbiuro redaktsii *Komsomol'skaia pravda* o rabote prodelannoi s ianvaria 1951 g. po mart 1952 g., 10/3/52, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.27, ll.24, 38.
[30] Closed Party Meeting, 23/1/50, d.25, l.11; 12/11/51, d.112, l.70.

2.1 After Stalin

In May 1953, *Pravda* criticised KP for "striving to copy other general political newspapers" and told journalists of the need to popularise the party's policies for a young audience "in a way that is imaginative, clear, and interesting".[31] Journalists at the paper were reminded to

> find the right form of language, the right form of address, and the right themes so that the paper is interesting for all young people. Young people do not forgive indifference and sterility. Thus, every article, every news story of a youth newspaper should be emotional and heart-felt so that the reader hears the voice of a friend.

Nikolai Drachinskii, Head of the Department of Illustration at KP, saw the article as a call to "see the face of our reader, and to take into account his/her specific demands".[32] He claimed that the paper's *redaktsiia* had ignored the suggestions of rank-and-file journalists, claiming that it had become "merely an administrative and management organ which deals with creative questions badly".[33] Yet in the three years between Stalin's death and the Twentieth Party Congress, though life at the paper became more convivial, journalists remained reticent about taking too radical a step towards readers.

The Congress changed this situation at a stroke. Khrushchev's speech had an impact on almost all aspects of newspaper work, including the way journalists at the paper saw their readers. Journalists believed that it was vital that the paper redoubled its efforts to communicate effectively with young people, a whole generation of whom had been "raised on the cult of personality".[34] One response to the Congress was the legitimisation of a popular – but not populist – impulse. There emerged an expectation that the press would seek to find popular forms to communicate the Party's ideas. An editorial in *Sovetskaia pechat'* in June 1956 stated:

> For us it is important for a person picking up a newspaper to read it, for him to see something good in it, an interesting interlocutor, who communicates something useful, shares news, reproaches, scolds, and gives good advice. How

[31] 'Byt' drugom i nastavnikom molodezhi' *Pravda* 22/5/53, 2.
[32] Open Party Meeting, 15/6/53, d.28, l.27.
[33] Ibid.
[34] 5/3/56, d.170, l.113.

> important it is for a newspaper not just to be glanced through, but read attentively and arouse thoughts in the reader![35]

Adzhubei and Voronov led the search for forms of popular journalism that would both interest readers and educate them in the tasks and achievements of Communist construction. A key resolution of January 1960 demanded that "Propaganda of the idea of Communism should be close and understandable to workers, should be sincere and reach the hearts and minds of every Soviet individual, rousing in him/her the brightest and noblest thoughts and feelings."[36] How this should be achieved remained shrouded in doubt, however. To give an example, the paper's Sunday supplement, which was supposed to be a compendium of such popular material, was frequently the target of criticism, both within the *redaktsiia* and outside: a 1960 Komsomol report on the paper's work censured it for lacking "ideological direction".[37] The tension between an entertainment impulse and an educational one was never far from the surface.

The paper's attempts to recalibrate its appeal to readers foundered in part because of journalists' lack of concrete knowledge. Because subscription limits were set from above, they provided no information on the paper's appeal to readers. Moreover, sociological research had been effectively banned under Stalin, which meant that journalists had to rely on letters to gain an understanding of their audience. But these letters gave contradictory signs: officially, KP was a newspaper for readers of Komsomol-age, but letters indicated that the paper had as many readers outside this demographic as within it.[38] Journalists were forced to engage in guesswork: "Fifteen to sixteen year-olds are our readers and we must work on them" claimed one journalist, while another insisted that the paper's main readers were 18-20 year olds.[39] They also resorted to some less-than-scientific research methods to find out about readers' interests, such as observing the preferences of the buying public

---

[35] 'Zhurnalist i chitatel'' SP 6 (1956), 1-3
[36] Postanovlenie TsK KPSS: 'O zadachakh partiinoi propagandy v sovremennykh usloviiakh', 10/1/60 in *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK, Tom 9* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), pp.500-501.
[37] 'Nekotorye zamechaniia o rabote gazety KP', 2/11/60, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.1002, l.138.
[38] A. Verkhovskaia, *Pis'mo v redaktsiiu i chitatel'* (Moscow: MGU, 1972), p.90.
[39] 22/11/54, d.133, l.162; 11/2/57, d.190, l.65.

at a *Soiuzpechat'* kiosk, noting readers' behaviour on a tram, or conducting a straw poll of fellow residents at one's apartment block.[40]

There was always a sense that, given their lack of knowledge of the audience, journalists were whistling in the dark. At a meeting in October 1956, Alan Starodub, one of the journalists in charge of the paper's coverage of the Moscow Youth Festival in 1957, lamented the fact that "we have whole groups of youth outside our field of vision, who fall out of our influence altogether".[41] He cited cases where the paper had expected a big reader response to an article, but received no letters, and called for more information on the demographic characteristics of subscribers, as well as the sending out of questionnaires to readers to find out their opinions on the paper. A year later he asked colleagues: "How does our reader read the paper? It's always remained a mystery, a secret to us." A recent edition was extremely serious – not in itself a bad thing, "but," he asked, "who was it designed for?"[42]

In the absence of data to the contrary, journalists were apt to imagine the reader that suited them. At a Party Meeting in 1962, Grigorii Oganov claimed that "today's reader is a person who is, first of all, active and ready for action; secondly, a thoughtful person; thirdly, a person with a critical disposition; and fourthly, a person who is more intellectual than we thought …"[43] Iurii Voronov stated that an excessive reliance on readers' opinions was harmful: "It so happens that when there is an inner dissatisfaction with the paper or with [certain] themes that the paper raises, some comrades try to reinforce their argument by relying on the opinion of readers. That's not right."[44] Instead, Voronov insisted that the paper had an educational role, arguing that there existed readers whom the paper should "take by the hand and form [формировать]".[45] At a Party meeting the year before, Vladimir Orlov decried the reader's tendency to respond to emotional material over, one presumes,

[40] 9/4/56, d.171, l.43; 4/8/64, d.365, l.38; 6/12/56, d.177, l.200; Party-Komsomol meeting, 13/12/61, d.35, ll.161-62.
[41] 8/10/56, d.126, ll.127-129, see also ll.132, 146.
[42] 17/5/57, d.194, l.50. See also 6/5/57, d.193, l.38.
[43] Open Party Meeting, 29/6/62, l.17.
[44] Ibid., l.60.
[45] Ibid., l.61.

more thoughtful items. He quoted an earlier comment by Allan Starodub, who had suggested that "the reader is not an icon", and added that "from our lofty position, the opinion of our readers can even be wrong".[46] Journalists thus recognised the problem of reader taste, but refused to relinquish their self-image as educators of the masses.

In what follows, I will examine how journalists at KP attempted to cater to their material, not necessarily to an existing reader, but to their particular image of the audience. The three examples presented are not exhaustive, but by examining the paper's attempts to promote cultured debate, to rejuvenate the Komsomol, and their divided attitudes to the discussion of personal relationships, I show how journalists sought to deliver a civic education, but, at the same time show how this belief in a 'cultured' reader led journalists to shun readers whose behaviours lay outside accepted limits.

2.2 The Young Communards' Club and the Scarlet Sail

Welcome, or Keep Out!, Elem Klimov's popular film of 1964, concerns a young Pioneer, Inochkin, who disobeys camp rules by swimming out to an island which lay beyond camp territory. A meeting is held to 'discuss' Inochkin's conduct, at which Comrade Diunin, the camp leader, addresses the assembled (and silent) Pioneers:

> **Diunin:** … Look around you. What magnificent buildings we have built. What wonderful lawns. Running water. Television. Gas cookers. Greenhouses, gardens, entertainment. Children! You are the masters of the camp. You! In return, what do we ask of you, friends? *[Gestures towards Pioneers]*
> **Pioneers:** *[In chorus]* DISCIPLINE!

Diunin expels Inochkin from the camp but, rather than face his grandmother, who, he believes, would die of a heart attack if she found out, Inochkin sneaks back into the camp. The remainder of the film sees the camp attendees run rings around the camp leader in a bid to hide Inochkin's presence, and ends

[46] Party-Komsomol meeting, 13/12/61, d.35, ll.173-174.

with the children victorious, and Diunin packing his bags and leaving. Diunin represented the Stalinist old guard who cherished discipline above all else.[47] While he proclaimed that Pioneers were the masters, it was he who did all the talking. But, as his fate shows, his values were increasingly out of kilter with post-Stalinist norms. So-called 'formalism' in Komsomol work, which encompassed tedious meetings, detachment on the part of the *aktiv*, and hierarchical structures, was a frequent target of criticism, both on the podiums of Komsomol Congresses and in KP journalists' articles and private discussions.[48]

This led to attempts to create a different kind of social space for young people. Chapter 1 discussed the Kaluga Torch, an example of a 'youth initiative club' which cropped up after the Twentieth Party Congress. Other scholars have highlighted the resurgence of amateur societies, or *samodeiatel'nost'*.[49] Another prominent example took shape in Leningrad, where a number of young pedagogues and youth leaders sought to overcome Komsomol formalism by introducing a grassroots initiative known as the 'Communard movement'. Evocative both of Paris, 1871 and of their successors in the Soviet 1920s, the Communard movement's name betrayed a fascination with the revolutionary past, which extended to the influence of the pedagogical teachings of figures such as Stanislav Shchatskii and Anton Makarenko.[50] Its ideas were a synthesis

---

[47] See Gleb Tsipursky, 'Having Fun in the Thaw: Youth Initiative Clubs in the Post-Stalin Years' *Carl Beck Papers* 2201 (2012), 7-10.

[48] See, for example, D. Novoplianskii, 'Dva pis'ma' KP 12/2/54, 3; 1/11/54, d.133, l.6. See also Tsipursky, 'Having Fun'; 'Conflict Between the Generations', in *The Soviet Cultural Scene 1956-1957*, ed. by Walter Z. Laqueur, George Lichtheim (New York: Atlantic Books, 1958), pp.202-214; Ralph Talcott Fisher, Jr., *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp.251-278.

[49] Susan Costanzo, 'Amateur Theatres and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-1970' *Slavonic and East European Review* 86/2 (2008), 372-395; Bella Ostromoukhova, 'Le Dégel et les Troupes Amateur: Changements politiques et activités artistiques des étudiants, 1953-1970', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/1-2 (2006), 303–26.

[50] Oleg Gazman, 'Kollektivnoe tvorcheskoe: Rasskaz o tom, kak rodilas' i razvivalas' metodika kollektivnogo tvorcheskogo vospitaniia.' *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, December 17, 1987; Simon Soloveichik, 'Kommuna, god piatyi' KP 31/7/63; Richard Sokolov, 'V poiskakh 'nastoiashchei' sotsial'noi pedagogiki', *Na putiakh k novoi shkole* 3 (2004), 5-10. <http://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/5/7/8/17/8.html#5> [Accessed: 13 March, 2011]. On the house communes of the 1920s, see Andy Willimott, 'Socialism in One Apartment: Activist Communes, Ideology, and Praxis in the Early Soviet State, 1917-1934'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, UEA, 2012.

of Western group psychotherapy, Soviet theories of play, and the British and Polish Scouts.[51] At the heart of the movement was the idea that members would decide what tasks to perform, carry them out, and evaluate success and failure themselves.

The movement's founders replaced notions of discipline, regimentation, militarism and formality with free and open debate around the campfire, childish creativity, and the *romantika* of guitar-accompanied sing-songs.[52] At a meeting of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in March 1956 on the public opinion [общественное мнение] of Pioneers and Komsomols, prominent Communard Liudmila Borisova criticised the scripted nature of Komsomol meetings, claiming that this caused passivity in Soviet children. "Where is the lively discussion of work," she asked, "where's the fervour and fire?" She concluded: "As a rule, we don't know the sincere opinions of our Komsomol members. But how can we educate people, how can we lead them, if we don't know what they think?"[53]

Because of its challenge to prevailing ideas, the Union of Enthusiasts, and its successor movement, the Leningrad-based Frunze Commune, have been termed "underground".[54] But this ignores the close ties between official state structures and the founders of the movement (the flagship of the movement, the Frunze Commune, was a district Pioneer headquarters), as well as their similar values. Not only was the idea of revitalising the Komsomol and Pioneers much debated within the Party, but the ideals of the 'Communard' method – a love of nature, moral values, comradely relations, concern for others, collective labour, discussion, and self-directed work – were all 'mainstream' Communist values. However, without any means of disseminating the method, its founders were

---

[51] Sokolov, 'V poiskakh'; Mikhail Kordonskii, 'Vvedenie v kommunarskoe dvizhenie' <http://www.altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/5/22/1> [Accessed: February 28, 2011];

[52] Ibid.; Roman Sinel'nikov, *Ostavliaiu vam na pamiat'... (Pesni kommunarov)* (Moscow: The Olympic Editorial, 1997). On the *romantika* of sing-songs see Petr Vail', Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998), pp.126-128.

[53] Liudmila G. Borisova. 'Puti sozdaniia obshchestvennogo mneniia pionerov i komsomol'tsev.' Doklad na Pedagogicheskikh chteniakh APN RSFSR, Moscow, March 1956. <http://www.kommunarstvo.ru/index.html?/biblioteka/bibborput.html> [Accessed: February 27 2011]

[54] Valerii Khiltunen, 'Perevod s prostogo na russkii' <http://soob.ru/n/2002/10/c/10> [Accessed: March 1, 2011].

forced to rely on word of mouth, which effectively limited its reach to Leningrad – at least until *Komsomol'skaia pravda* journalist Simon Soloveichik, who visited School No. 91 in Leningrad and wrote an article praising the Frunze Commune, came to visit.[55] Within weeks, the paper followed up its article with a new feature, "Klub Iu.K." (standing for 'Юный коммунист': "young communist"), which brought the interaction between this unofficial, peripheral method, and the official Komsomol organ to a new level.

The Club's access requirements were modest. It was open to "all those who refuse to compromise with shortcomings, and seek to improve the life that surrounds us".[56] Any school or *tekhnikum*'s Komsomol organisation would receive an official pennant if they managed to complete two of the tasks set by the paper, such as performing a variety show at a collective farm, painting the walls of their classroom or holding a debate on the question "What is a hero?"[57] Buoyed by the publicity, the movement rapidly grew from a few hundred enthusiasts in Leningrad to a quarter of a million followers across Russia, while the newly-built "Little Eagle" [Орленок] summer camp on the Black Sea adopted the Communard Method.[58] This interaction between official structures, the paper, and the Communard movement shows that ideas could circulate upwards: a grassroots idea could be picked up by the press, who might succeed in bringing it to the attention of officials, who could then adopt the method on a wider scale.

It is not hard to see why the Young Communards' Club had such an impact on the Communard movement, for, as Soloveichik later admitted, its goal "virtually consisted in propagandising the experience of Frunze Commune".[59] The first edition contained a transcript of a bad-tempered debate between school pupils from Leningrad, who advocated Communard methods, and those

---

[55] Simon Soloveichik, 'Frunzenskaia kommuna' KP 10/1/62, 4. On Soloveichik's link with the Coommunards, see Vladimir Shakhidzhanian, 'Mne interesny vse liudi' <http://1001.ru/books/people/mivl24.htm> [Accessed: 11 March, 2011].

[56] 'Shkola, klass, druz'ia … interesno li tebe s nimi?' KP 24/1/62, 2-3.

[57] 'Slovo - kommunaram.' KP 24/9/63, 4; 'Zadanie – bespokoinym', KP 18/3/62, 4 ; 'Slovo – kommunaram', KP 24/9/63, 4.

[58] Simon Soloveichik, *Vospitanie tvorchestvom* (Moscow: Znanie, 1978), p.19. Gazman, 'Kollektivnoe'.

[59] Soloveichik, *Vospitanie*, p.12.

from Moscow, who exemplified 'traditional' approaches.[60] When one student from Moscow spoke indifferently about a task his class had carried out only for the sake of an easy life, Leningrad communard Ira Merkusheva responded angrily: "What are you saying – I can't bear to listen to this! Why are you so indifferent? … Why do you agree to do what your heart's not in?" Another student chipped in: "I'm sure if the teacher left you in peace; if they granted you absolute freedom, you'd completely lose your heads ... You're completely lacking in initiative!" When a third student, Olia Tsvetkova argued that some Komsomols simply "don't make use of their rights", a Muscovite responded angrily:

> **Zhenia Lebedev**: I was also one of the active ones – a secretary of the committee, even. You speak at a meeting, you try [to make an effort], you become passionate, but you look into someone's cold eyes, you see someone bent over a book, and your passion disappears, and you even become ashamed of yourself – you think: absolutely no-one cares. Nobody understands what they're voting for, and everybody just thinks: the sooner this meeting ends the better. So what am I getting on my soapbox for like an idiot? That's how the active turn into the passive.
> **Natasha Fedorova**: It needs to be the other way round, so that the passive become active. What did you do to make that happen?
> **Zhenia Lebedev**: Please forgive me, but I'm about to use a primitive formula: why do I have to do more than others?

The meeting ended with one Leningrad student lamenting: "We're fighting over different things, and now it's suddenly become clear: there are two sharply opposite lifestyles, and we live differently." Lebedev's comments were mirrored in a letter published in October 1963 from Ol'ga Kashkina, a tenth grade pupil from Saratov, who complained that Komsomol meetings were uninteresting, and that her class was passive. She wanted to change the situation, but admitted that "Alone, I can't stir them up and rouse them, they need to want it themselves, to understand that things can't carry on like this."[61] Amongst the many replies was a letter from Aleksandr Kovalenko from Leningrad, who claimed that he had no interest in the Komsomol because of its "pursuit of box-

[60] 'Shkola', 2-3.
[61] 'Chto ty dumaesh' o shkol'nom komsomole?' KP 18/10/63, 4.

ticking", a surfeit of dull circulars and orders from above, and the obstructiveness of teachers. "It's time to believe in Komsomols," he concluded.[62]

Ol'ga and Aleksandr's letters were among the first to be published under the umbrella of a new rubric called "The Scarlet Sail" [Алый парус], which was named after a children's adventure of the 1920s by Aleksandr Grin (a key romantic author, according to Vail' and Genis).[63] The story's faith in youthful independence and playfulness chimed with the romantic values of the post-Stalin period, and was later made into a film.[64] The *Scarlet Sail* was the product of journalists like Soloveichik, who believed that the press needed to listen to the needs of adolescent readers – a group often ignored by the paper. This lack of coverage was thought to be a cause of social problems. At a *letuchka* at the start of the 1960s, Elena Bol'shakova linked an anecdote about a teenage *stiliaga* who refused to pay for a bus ticket, a recent article on criminal adolescents, and the lack of material aimed directly at this age group.[65] The *Scarlet Sail* filled this gap in the paper's coverage extremely effectively, prompting thousands of letters every year. A survey of 1966 suggested that it was read regularly by over four million readers.[66] What was perhaps most appealing was the rubric's magazine format, featuring a varied range of materials, from brief snippets of readers' letters to longer articles by 'grown-up' journalists.

For journalists like Soloveichik, it provided yet another opportunity to advance Communard ideals.[67] Indeed, Klub Iu. K. and the Scarlet Sail were often printed on the same page, and possessed complementary aims. But while the Young Communards' Club was concerned with collective values, the Scarlet Sail was predominantly concerned with individual issues. Its articles suggested that young people should take personal responsibility for their actions, seek their true goal in life, and, most importantly, think for themselves because, as one

---

[62] A. Kovalenko, 'Pochemu ia ostyl' KP 18/10/63, 4.
[63] Vail'/Genis, p.127.
[64] Alexander Grin, *The Seeker of Adventure: Selected Stories* (Moscow: Progress, 1979), pp.19-93. The film was *Alye parusa* (1961, dir. Aleksandr Petushko).
[65] 18/1/60, d.268, ll.115-122. On the youth 'crisis' see Kristin Roth-Ey,'Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2003, 46-98.
[66] HIA, Boris Grushin Papers, Box 4, Folder 5.
[67] Simon Soloveichik, *Posledniaia kniga* (Moscow: Pervoe sentiabria, 1999), p.272.

article told readers, "You're not children any more".[68] Independent thinking was a central value of the Scarlet Sail. One of its articles proclaimed that "A person not possessing their own opinion, their own view on things; a person repeating parrot-like what they've heard and learned; a person foregoing their own conscience for the sake of a quiet life is not a grown-up, but a know-nothing, even if they're fifty-odd years old."[69]

Such independence of mind sometimes breached collective norms of social propriety. The Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov told the story of tenth grader Sergei, who, prevented from dating his beloved, proclaimed his love by painting "Happy Birthday, Kira!" in red letters on the fence outside Kira's residence.[70] For Aitmatov, Sergei's actions were not hooliganism, but proof that he had "unfurled his Scarlet Sail in life": an adolescent expression of "his own understanding of justice, his right to independence" and an "assertion of his own relationship to life". Aitmatov asked rhetorically whether Sergei had displayed childishness or maturity and conviction, and replied that both were present in his actions. That, Aitmatov claimed, was: "the charm, the uniqueness of the age when a person's will awakens, when he himself develops in himself the features of his character".[71]

The Young Communards Club and the Scarlet Sail reflected changing norms of citizenship for young people. Though individuals were still supposed to progress through the official structures – Pioneer, Komsomol, Party – in order to come to political maturity, but structures were painted as meaningful only insofar as they were invested with individual values. In a 1963 article, written to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Frunze Commune, Soloveichik stated that the Pioneer organisation's main goal was to inculcate "values and independence", and continued that: "There can be no principles where work proceeds only by orders from above …" Soloveichik concluded by saying that: "One wonderful day he will tie the red necktie of the Pioneers, and perhaps he will even become a Communard, and he will be glad of the honour, and at home

[68] A. Rekemchuk, 'Kogda ty stanovsish'sia vzroslym' KP 4/12/63, 4.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Chingiz Aitmatov, 'Druzhi s vetrom', KP 24/9/63, 4.
[71] Ibid.

mum … will worry: what if they don't take him?"[72] In these quotations, we not only see the intrusion of Communard values onto Pioneer values, but, in the second quotation, a telling ambiguity: to what does "the honour" refer? – entry into the Pioneers, or into the Communard movement? This ambiguity was indicative of the fact that, although the Communard movement had emerged from within official structures, its pursuit of new values was in some ways threatened to supplant them. This would be the cause of significant conflict in the years to come.

2.3 "The Club is Open – Come In!"

The Communard movement illustrates how practices of citizenship underwent a profound change after Stalin's death. Under Stalin, participation in certain key rituals had offered the key to social belonging.[73] But though participation remained central to questions of citizenship in the Khrushchev period (there were, after all, still parades and rallies and one was still expected to stand and applaud at Congresses), citizenship practices were now expected to be meaningful on an individual level.[74] Individuals were expected, not just to observe the form, but to find their own relation, their own place, within Soviet civic life.[75] It is thus no accident that sincerity [искренность] became the buzz-word of the Khrushchev period, for it posits an opposition between an outer surface that is 'for show', and hence untruthful, and an authentically personal inner core. The task of the individual under Khrushchev was to bring that inner core into line with the publically mandated values.

---

[72] Soloveichik, 'Kommuna, god piatyi'.

[73] In the discussion that follows I concentrate on *practices* of citizenship, rather than the formal question of who had the right to become a citizen. On this latter see Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Soviet Citizenship, More or Less: Rights, Emotions, and States of Civic Belonging' *Kritika* 7/3 (Summer 2006), 487-528.

[74] On performative practices of citizenship in the first Soviet decades, see Elizabeth A. Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Brooks, *Thank You*; Yekelchyk, 'Civic Duty'; Natalia Skradol, 'Laughing with Comrade Stalin: Laughter of the Audience in the Great Kremlin Palace in 1939' *Russian Review* 68/1 (2009), 26-48.

[75] Cf. Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 279-328.

As the reference to Pomerantsev suggests, the Soviet intelligentsia was a prominent player in the process of social change under Khrushchev. Students, writers, artists, and academics took to the podium at meetings of the party, creative unions and other formal gatherings to debate the future direction of Soviet society, and they frequently offered far-reaching diagnoses of social ills.[76] However, the unruly public reaction to the Secret Speech meant that such debates were considered by journalists and regime alike to be potentially dangerous.[77] Part of the reason for such disquiet was the prominent role of Soviet youth. In universities across the country, young people discussed the implications of Khrushchev's speech, in the process venturing opinions that were anathema to the officially-held values.[78] In Chapter 3, we saw how the return of the positive hero was seen as one solution to this state of affairs, but other solutions were put forward. Speaking at one of the first editorial *letuchki* after the Twentieth Party Congress, Il'ia Shatunovskii said that "Today our newspaper ought not to give young people prepared formulae, but to teach young people and all our readers to critically interpret occurrences, and to reach by themselves correct and important ideas and conclusions".[79] The key words in that statement were "by themselves" and "correct". Shatunovskii's comments were indicative of the opinions of many journalists who saw the importance of unlocking youthful independence, but at the same time believed that it would require the involvement of journalists to ensure that that autonomy was kept within 'correct' limits.

A perfect example of the paper's attempts to straddle the border between youthful self-expression, and the requirement to keep debate within safe limits, was provided by the 'discussion club', a form which, borrowing from

---

[76] Karl Loewenstein, 'The Thaw: Writers and the Public Sphere in the Soviet Union, 1951-1957' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 1999.
[77] Polly Jones, 'From the Secret Speech to the Burial of Stalin: Real and Ideal Responses to De-Stalinization' in *Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2006), 41-63; Vladimir Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the post-Stalin Years*. Trans. Elaine McClarnand (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).
[78] Benjamin K. Tromley, 'Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2007, pp.206-309.
[79] 19/3/56, d.170, ll.43-44.

the structure of Komsomol or Pioneer meeting, emerged at KP in the late-1950s and early-1960s. There, readers debated important issues of the day with their contemporaries, following on the heels of a debate held within a school or Komsomol organisation, the transcript of which was printed in the paper. This was, most likely, a response to a Komsomol Central Committee request of 1956 to use debates and discussions more widely.[80]

Thus, in April 1957, at roughly the same time that the regime was beginning to crack down on the "harmful" discussions of the Moscow intelligentsia after the publication of Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*, the first edition of the paper's "Senior Students' Club" [Клуб старшеклассников] was printed.[81] While writers' debates frequently overstepped the borders of the acceptable, KP's discussions were positioned firmly within conventional limits, discussing such staples as "How to become a good person"; "How to become strong"; "What path leads to a great feat?" or "How to keep pace with our century".

Nevertheless, by encouraging individuals to put forward their own ideas, KP was endorsing a new set of values that owed much to the intelligentsia. The headline to the club's first discussion, "The club is open, come in!", illustrates that this was to be a gathering to which all were welcome – indeed, the article is peppered with words suggesting inclusiveness: "open", "not closed", "participation".[82] The ideals of the club were clear from the litany of synonyms for thought, discussion and conversation: "to have a discussion" [потолковать], "to say/express" [сказать, высказать], "to argue" [поспорить], "interesting conversation" [интересный разговор], "human thought" [человеческая мысль], "serious reflection" [серьезный раздумье], as well as negative reference to teachers who "don't prompt any thoughts at all" [никаких мыслей не будят].[83] Perhaps the clearest guide to importance of Khrushchev-era values of sincerity is provided by the "strict condition" to which all participants

[80] Tsipursky, 22.
[81] Zapiska otdela kul'tury TsK KPSS: 'O nekotorykh nezdorovykh iavleniakh v Moskovskom otdelenii Soiuza pisatelei', no later than 30/5/57 in *Apparat TsK KPSS i kul'tura, 1953-1957. Dokumenty*. ed. V.Iu. Afiani, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2001), p.680.
[82] 'Klub otkryt, vkhodite!' KP 24/4/57, 2-3.
[83] Ibid., 2-3.

apparently signed up to before entering the club: "Always to say honestly and openly what you think".[84]

The paper's discussion clubs proved to be a success, with journalists extremely enthusiastic about their educational potential. Readers displayed similar enthusiasm, sending almost five thousand letters in response to the first debate, with subsequent debates each receiving around two to three thousand.[85] The biggest criticism of the club's first edition came from one of the club's "grown-up friends" – a literature teacher who was upset that his closing address had been edited out of the final article.[86] However, one journalist endorsed that decision, reminding colleagues that: "The club shouldn't turn into a lesson on literature," and adding that the club existed "so that children could openly express what they think, and so that the pressing problems of today's children are presented in the paper today".[87]

In his introduction to a published selection of columns from *Klub starsheklassnikov* and its 1961 successor, "Time and I" [Я и время], editor Iurii Voronov, having listed a number of debate titles, such as "What is happiness?" and "How to find a path in life," wrote:

> The discussions that take place in [the Club] will help you to answer these questions. You will note that we don't say 'answer'. We say 'help to answer' not from caution and not from modesty. There are questions that everybody needs to answer for themselves. But nevertheless, it will be very useful to you to know what people say and think: your peers, your contemporaries, your comrades in battle.[88]

But although individuals were supposed to come to their own opinion, they were also expected to bow to the majority: "It is remarkable that whatever argument blazed, the opinion of the absolute majority of its participants was unanimous. A person can be wrong, but the collective – never."[89] So although the presence of a range of opinions marked a change from the Stalinist press,

---

[84] Ibid., 2.
[85] 'Predlozheniia po rabsel'korovskomu dvizheniiu', undated 1958, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.228, l.49; 'Doklad redkollegii gazety KP', undated 1958, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.929, l.18.
[86] 6/5/57, d.193, l.8.
[87] Ibid., ll.8-9.
[88] *Alyi parus*, ed. by N. Sidneva (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1966), p.4.
[89] Ibid., p.5.

opinions that deviated from the norm were rapidly rebutted. Discussion clubs gave readers the image of an ideal public, composed of rational individuals using their powers of reasoning to debate important issues, but its organisers believed that there was a clear right-or-wrong opinion, and that the natural rationality of the public would ensure that the Party's truth would win the day. In this sense, discussion clubs provided a microcosm of the mechanisms of Soviet citizenship under Khrushchev, where individuals were permitted to debate questions of everyday life on the proviso that such debates would eventually arrive at the 'correct' answer.

2.4 "All women are offended by your thoughtlessness!"

The closer we examine KP journalists' discussions of their educational work, the clearer emerges the tension between the ostensible ideals of debate as being 'open to all', and a highly normative vision of the ideal participant. As we have seen, journalists were more than willing to welcome *exemplary* individuals onto the pages of their newspaper. This section illustrates what happened when readers' contributions failed to live up to journalists' high standards.

Komsomol'skaia pravda was well known for its discussion of questions of moral and ethical questions. As early as 1950, Dmitrii Goriunov called the treatment of such questions as KP's specialty, and a decade later Agitprop's Aleksei Romanov placed the paper in first place for its treatment of such questions.[90] A resolution of 1960 called on journalists to intensify the educational role of the press in moral and ethical questions.[91] A year later, the 'Moral Code of the Builder of Communism' was published, its twelve commandments amounting to a Communist covenant in all but name. Communists were invited to display a "high sense of public duty" and foster "mutual respect between individuals", but also to remember that "whoever does not work, does not eat".[92]

---

[90] 'Vystuplenie glavnogo redaktora', l.8; A. Romanov, 'Vysokaia ideinost' pechati i zhruanlistskoe masterstvo', SP 1 (1960), 7.
[91] 'O zadachakh', 507-508.
[92] 'Programma KPSS' KP 2/8/61, 2.

Amongst intellectuals, there was a tendency to see the transformation of the individual as a prerequisite for wider social transformation.[93] But journalists could react to this injunction in differing ways. For many journalists, such as Anatolii Agranovskii and Tat'iana Tess at *Izvestiia*, and Vera Benderova and Inna Rudenko at *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, the sketch provided a means to discuss contemporary social issues, and tease out the public implications of individual conflicts.[94] For these writers, the journalist needed to rely not on gut feeling, but on careful, balanced thought. In a speech in 1964, Tess emphasised the sense of responsibility needed: "Journalists who begin work on a moral theme are not just journalists. They are also investigators, researchers, doctors, and then, in the end, judges. Only then do they have the right to embark on such themes."[95] However, in their internal discussions, many KP journalists were not so even-handed, displaying an intolerant, even mocking, attitude towards those who deviated from established norms of *behaviour*. Male journalists, in particular, seemed particularly hostile to tackling personal issues. For them, only lively, goal-oriented debate, designed to create citizens who thought the right things about the right topics, was acceptable. Dealing with the emotional lives of often-naïve teenage girls, by contrast, was seen as demeaning and emasculating.

One letter published under the *Forum of Our Readers* banner from Anna Nikoleva, a tenth grade student from Pskov *oblast*, raised the important question of why life was different to the way it was represented in books and newspapers: "I'm an ignoramus in culture, studies … and life. How could I not be when all I've seen is my village and school? I only know life from books and newspapers, and people seemed to me genuine [простыми] and wonderful." But she contrasted this to what she saw around her: "In people, in those surrounding me, I see so much rudeness, vulgarity, callousness, and

[93] Anatoly Pinsky, 'The Individual after Stalin: Fedor Abramov, Russian Intellectuals, and the Revitalization of Soviet Socialism, 1953-1962' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2011.
[94] On this dynamic see Wolfe, pp.71-103.
[95] 'Stenogramma vsesoiuznogo tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia publitsistov. Tom II', 4/6/64, GARF, f.10124, op.1, d.243, l.124.

philistinism."[96] Such an anguished letter may have betrayed a certain ingenuousness, but its sentiments were nevertheless rife within a public culture which aimed to project a certain innocent romanticism. For many young people, entering into a world rather more prosaic than the one described in popular culture, witnessing contradictions between the two could be a traumatic experience.[97] Yet sports correspondent Iurii Zerchaninov pulled no punches in his assessment of this "silly" girl. Unable to countenance that someone could genuinely hold such opinions, he wondered whether someone had concocted the letter as a joke.[98] He insisted "maybe only a housewife" would be as foolish as to believe that people were "swine" [сволочи] just because they swore. He characterised her as a "naïve girl who read books and in her books everyone seemed wonderful" but concluded that she was a "sheltered person, trapped, sick," for being so negative about the world around her. "If she's got no friends," concluded Zerchaninov, "that means that no-one wants to be friends with her…. Why use her to start a discussion?"[99]

In 1964, the paper printed a letter from a teenager from Kazakhstan, Olia Akhmetova, who, on a train journey, had been tricked into sleeping (it is implied) with a boy, Sergei, who promised that he would marry her. Sergei never replied to her letters, and, when she visited his home town, he refused to see her. She wrote to the paper, saying "I can't understand why he said that he loved me and wanted to marry me. I'm offended to the point of tears. I've read so many books, but I've never read anything like this."[100] She appealed to readers for their opinions, asking "How do you know if someone really loves you?"

It was not out of the ordinary for the paper to print articles on relationships, but they often caused problems: Agitprop's Aleksei Romanov

---

[96] 'Podvig – mgnovenie ili zhizn'?' KP 15/5/60, 2.
[97] Precisely this state-sanctioned naïveté is commented upon by one of the interviewees in Robin Hessman's documentary *My Perestroika* (2010). See also the comments on belief in Communism made by interviewees in Donald Raleigh's *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk About Their Lives*. Ed. and Trans. Donald J.Raleigh (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp.72-73, 199-200, 234-236.
[98] 16/5/60, d.272, l.87.
[99] Ibid., l.86.
[100] 'Pochemu tak sluchilos'?' KP 22/2/64, 2.

decried the paper's "dangerous and unacceptably frivolous approach" to "human relations" in a discussion asking "Can one be in love with two people?"[101] Yet the recurrence of such questions showed that this was a common concern: a letter on the same subject was also received by the paper in 1962, and the issue was discussed at Komsomol meetings.[102] There remained a certain prudishness in Soviet culture (it was, of course, not unique in this respect) that prevented the paper from examining such issues.[103] Later that year, an article on sex education decried the euphemistic way in which the subject was talked about, but it did not mention the word "sex" once.[104] The day after Akhmetova's letter was published, Kim Kostenko maintained that: "People are talking about this letter only because it's about love. In our youth paper we rarely touch on such areas as personal life and intimate life".[105] This was precisely the reason that the paper had been right to publish the letter, claimed Grigorii Oganov: "Why does the newspaper need to deal with this? Alas, the paper needs to because pedagogues, the family, and the collective still do it very badly".[106]

But would this letter help journalists to educate readers? Many journalists worried that readers might confuse the paper's lack of opprobrium for approval, that readers would think that the paper was "on the side of this vulgar, idiotic little girl", as Vladimir Ponizovskii put it.[107] Sasha Egorov argued that "to print this [letter], calculating that our readers are so discriminating that they'll bombard us with letters, that they'll answer this question correctly, is naïve".[108] He continued, "We didn't give this letter any evaluation, we didn't in

---

[101] Aleksei Romanov, 'Moral'no-eticheskaia tema na stranitsakh gazet' SP 9 (1959), 5. Romanov is referring to 'Mozhno li liubit' dvoikh?', KP 4/1/58, 4.
[102] See 8/5/62, d.322, l.3; Tsipursky, p.21.
[103] Anna Rotkirch, "What Kind of Sex Can You Talk About?' Acquiring Sexual Knowledge in Three Soviet Generations', in *On Living Through Soviet Russia*, ed. by Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, Anna Rotkirch (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.105-107.
[104] Irina Ovchinnikova, 'Net, ne zapretnaia zona' KP, 1/12/64, 2.
[105] 5/2/64, d.361, l.17. On discourses around sex in the Khrushchev period, see Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp.51-65.
[106] 5/2/64, d.361, l.16. See also Chukaeva's comments (l.16)
[107] Ibid., l.15.
[108] Ibid., l.12.

the slightest bit [ни в чем] show our ironic attitude to it”.[109] However, others had more faith in the audience: “we have to believe in our readers, that they'll understand everything correctly: our readers aren't idiots. If we had published this letter with our comments, it would have lost all of its charm and directness. It's just a wonderful human document. It's very good that it found its way onto the pages of the paper,” claimed Chukaeva.[110] The dividing line between the two camps seemed to be the amount of trust that could be placed in the audience. Some were reluctant to relinquish the peremptory tone of authority that journalists had traditionally employed, but others felt that leaving the question open was healthy: “We're sitting here and arguing, and young people are too,” commented Boris Pankin, to which Sonia Startseva retorted “We're arguing, but we're all grown-ups”.[111]

Unsurprisingly, journalists’ positions on the wisdom of printing the letter to a large extent depended on how they judged Olia’s actions. Grigorii Oganov, who approved of printing the letter, sympathised with Olia, saying that she was not a “vulgar” person, but an individual who had got caught up in a “vulgar situation”.[112] The paper needed to tread very carefully, as it was dealing with a fragile teenager, not a fully-grown adult, he argued. As Karel'shtein put it: “We need to treat such human documents carefully. Though we could lead a more severe conversation with a grown-up, it's best to reason with Akhmetova and people like her”.[113] Thus, journalists needed to see Olia's letter from a less lofty, more sympathetic, standpoint. As Chukaeva commented:

> If, from the heights of our 30-40 years, we deign to sink to the level of this person, without considering it humiliating, then we'll help her and those like her. For her, this is a supreme tragedy, an experience from which she can extricate herself and become a real person, or turn into an offended whiner and a vulgar person.[114]

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., l.16.
[111] Ibid., l.16-17.
[112] Ibid., l.12.
[113] Ibid., l.15.
[114] Ibid., l.13.

For the letter's defenders, it was vital to address their young audience on their own terms. Publication was justified insofar as it gave the paper an opportunity to speak to a group who didn't have fully formed viewpoints, and was therefore vulnerable to con-artists like Sergei. But even Olia's most passionate defender, Oganov was forced to admit that "Of course, she's not got two brain cells to rub together ..." [Она, конечно, не семи лядей во лбу].[115] For others who opposed publication there was "nothing there except for a normal, grey vulgar person [пошлятина]", while Ponizovskii went as far as to largely absolve Sergei of blame: "The majority [of readers] will think that the girl is right, although the main criticism shouldn't be laid at the door of the boy [не в адрес этого парня], but at her door – it should be criticism of her attitude to life".[116]

On the evidence of readers' printed replies (which are, of course, not a scientific cross-section) KP's audience was no more sympathetic than Ponizovskii and Egorov. True, some were conciliatory, promising Olia that "[...] your next good friend will certainly be a million times better than Sergei Gavrilov".[117] (Not by coincidence, this letter, the most sympathetic of those printed, was condemned as being "written at the same level as Ol'ga's."[118]) Most, however, were less understanding. Three female Komsomol members declaimed: "In our country we still haven't got rid of women who don't give a fig for their womanly virtue and pride" and added that "All women are offended by your thoughtlessness." One man asked whether anybody could be so stupid in real life, while another questioned Olia's motives, arguing that her acceptance of such a marriage proposal meant "that she's got one aspiration in life – to get married quickly, or, as they say, to "make it". Can we really talk about 'love' in such circumstances?"[119] The most indicative reply came from a class of school pupils in Taldy-Kurgan in Kazakhstan (responses to KP articles were often set as class exercises), who told Olia that she was mad to think of getting married at the age of seventeen: "Seventeen, Olia – that's the age at which a person is still

[115] Ibid., l.14.
[116] Ibid., l.12, 15.
[117] 'Chto eto – liubov'?' KP 25/2/64, 2.
[118] 18/2/64, d.361, l.35.
[119] 'Pochemu tak sluchilos'?', KP 22/2/64, 2.

just searching for a goal in life, absorbing knowledge, in order to generously pay the people back for their care", and castigated her trip to see Sergei as "stupid" and "humiliating". They concluded with the hope that their comradely advice would allow Olia to "stand on the right path" once more.[120] But whilst class 11A might have thought that she had done the right thing in appealing for help, one wonders if Olia felt the same way, and whether the combination of know-it-all advice and homilies really did help her recover from her traumatic experience.

The *delo Akhmetova* was traumatic for journalists, too, and the widely-perceived failure of the letter remained in journalists' memory for many years to come. In 1967, Sof'ia Finger spoke of colleagues' "suspicion" of such themes after the ill-fated story of Ol'ia Akhmetova", adding that she understood journalists' caution: "two or three years, that's understandable. But when this suspicion becomes prolonged, then that is foolish."[121] In 1969, Inna Rudenko said that the Akhmetova case raised a question: "Do we need discussions for Ol'ia Akhmetova, or do we need discussions for academics? Is it true, the point of view that people conduct research of social and political questions and place more significance on them, and so the paper doesn't need to conduct discussions?" Rudenko implied that by failing to tackle such questions the paper was losing its connection with and influence over its young readers. As the next section shows, such questions of reader interest would become increasingly important after Khrushchev's ouster, leading to intense discussion of what readers wanted, but also intense confusion as to how this should be squared with the perceived ideological needs of the audience.

* * *

The Communard movement, discussion clubs, and debates over morals represented three distinct ways in which KP attempted to revivify Soviet society and its institutions through public participation. This illustrates that more inclusive notions of the public had emerged, albeit accompanied by powerful mechanisms of exclusion. These examples demonstrate how widespread was the civilising mission of Soviet journalists, who believed that their task was to

---

[120] Ibid.
[121] Proizvodstvennoe soveshchanie KP, 16/11/67, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.458, l.183.

"form" individuals, to 'refine' them into something better. The individual to be shown by Soviet media was not an ordinary individual, however, but someone intelligent, thoughtful, and single minded[122] – even if that single-mindedness could spill over into over-exuberance.

Yet journalists' understanding of the individual could be constricting. The messy business of readers' everyday emotional lives remained off-limits, and was even stigmatised. In the battle between untidy reality and wholesome myth, many journalists preferred the latter. As Sasha Didusenko stated at one editorial meeting, it had always been the paper's "tradition", "not to show the reader as they are, but also to lead this reader behind you so as to open their eyes to the most interesting and vital questions that the present day places before us."[123] Journalists were not expected to reflect their readership as it was, but as it should be. However, after Khrushchev's ouster, this normative view of the reader was to come under increased challenge from an unexpected quarter.

3.1 The Decline of the Reader-citizen

Between the October Plenum of 1964 and the Prague Spring of 1968, journalists began to see their readers anew. It was a period when Soviet authorities gave the green light to certain kinds of 'progressive' social research which changed journalists' vision of the audience. It was also a period when these self-same authorities became far more wary of activity taking place outside the bounds of the Party and sought to integrate public energies into official structures (even if the overpowering formalism of such institutions meant that they became emptied of meaning).[124] Over the course of this four-year period, the Communards, and its KP counterpart the *Young Communards' Club*, became

[122] Bella Ostromoukhova, 'KVN - "Moldezhnaia kul'tura shestdesiatykh"?', *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 4/36 (2004), 38-39.
[123] Open Party Meeting, 29/6/62, d.37, l.41.
[124] See Aleksei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Sergei Zhuk , *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: the West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2010); Steven Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Ch.4.

casualties of this drive to regain control of Soviet social space from the apparently erosive force of *obshchestvennost'*.

It would be wrong to depict this as a case of Khrushchev-era tolerance versus Brezhnev-era repression. The Communards had been on shaky ground right from the start, with frequent conflicts between representatives of the movement and officials within local Komsomol and Pioneer organs, with the latter seeing the Communards as usurping its natural prerogatives.[125] *Klub Iu.K.*, for example, was a club *for* Komsomol groups, but not entirely a part of those structures. By issuing orders to young people, the paper was circumventing central authority. Young Communards were beginning to demand that Komsomol practice should live up to the theory. "At *gorkoms* and *raikoms* of the Komsomol, and at school committees teenagers began to meet who were not indifferent and dissatisfied with the greyness of school life," commented one prominent pedagogue many years later.[126]

But if before Khrushchev's ouster such tensions were bearable, now all de-centralising tendencies were under suspicion. At the 1966 Komsomol Congress, Pavlov called "discipline" and "unity" the most important goals of the organisation, and there was a clampdown on many of the grass-roots initiatives of the Khrushchev period.[127] In December 1965, the Central Committee of the Komsomol issued an order to the Communard Movement to either subsume itself to the official Komsomol and Pioneer structures or be closed down.[128] The next summer, the "Little Eagle" camp was subjected to severe criticism, in particular for its discussions which, according to the Komsomol's resolution, "provoke an unhealthy fuss [ажиотаж], and lead school children down the path of political ambiguity, and educate them in nit-picking [критиканство] and

[125] E.g. 'Piat' voprosov o samom glavnom' KP 4/12/63, 4; 'Peregovornyi punkt orliat.' KP, 20/11/64. On this conflict see Gazman, 'Kollektivnoe'.
[126] Gazman, 'Kollektivnoe'.
[127] Tsipursky, 36-37.
[128] Sinel'nikov, *Ostavliaiu*.

nihilism".[129] Klub Iu. K. no longer appeared in the paper, and there were even attempts to force Pankin to close the Scarlet Sail, which he resisted.[130]

The fatal blow to an already stricken movement was dealt two years later, when "Socialism with a Human Face" in Czechoslovakia persuaded Brezhnev that the values exemplified by the Communards were politically dangerous. By the end of that year, the entire Communard movement was *de facto* banned. Prominent members were the subject of harassment: some were excluded from their pedagogical institutes, thrown out of the Komsomol, banned from working with Pioneer and Komsomol members, or purged from summer camps.[131] The movement entered into a two decade-long "period of conservation", only re-emerging during the period of *perestroika*.[132]

It is hard not to see the fall of the Communard movement and the Young Communards' Club as the death of the dream that journalists could join forces with the public to transform society. Yet evidence of such a transition in models of journalistic 'governmentality' was evident even before the Prague Spring. Discussion was still oriented towards social transformation, but not through the power of public opinion, but expertise. Rubrics like 'Calendar of Economic Reform' began to appear in this period, and they showed that, while debate was still active, the floor belonged only to those who possessed a new esoteric language of consumers, optimal pricing, and other such buzz-words. Despite a belief that material should be oriented to a wide public, a stratification of content was evident. Only one in five readers read such material as 'Calendar of Economic Reform', making it the single least popular feature in the entire paper.[133] Such was the orientation towards specialisation in this period that

---

[129] Postanovlenie TsK VLKSM: 'O ser'eznykh nedostatkakh v rabote Vserossiiskogo pionerskogo lageria "Orlenok"', 26/6/66, RGASPI, f.9, op.1, d.114, ll.32-35. My thanks to Evelin Eichler for this reference.
[130] Inna Rudenko, 'Za 'abstraktnyi gumanizm'' in *Bol'she, chem gazeta*, ed. Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), p.120.
[131] Sinel'nikov, *Ostavliaiu*.
[132] Gazman, 'Kollektivnoe'.
[133] HIA, Box 4, Folder 5.

Editor Boris Pankin even suggested that moral questions should be adjudicated by a panel of experts.[134]

Journalists in the 1970s certainly retained some sense of guiding readers. The paper continued to print articles on love and happiness and not only did the Scarlet Sail survive the cull of 1968, it was one of the few rubrics from the Soviet period to survive the transition to post-Communism. Paradoxically, discussions on the relationship between the individual and the collective now became increasingly formalised, while the potentially subversive individuality that the paper had originally grounded in the language of the collective and the perfection of social relations was allowed to continue. It is one of the ironies of the Brezhnev era that any number of actions that potentially undermined the regime's ultimate goals were allowed to continue, just as long as a superficial adherence to the *forms* of belief could be maintained.

But for the children of the Twentieth Congress, for whom form and content were united, the change from romantic to cynical reason was difficult to accept. In 1971, editor Boris Pankin printed an article by the Scarlet Sail's Simon Soloveichik, which advocated the idiosyncratic pedagogical methods of a schoolteacher by the name of Shatalov.[135] What had once been seen as an acceptable way to encourage social transformation was now considered to be dangerous "abstract humanism".[136] After the usual round of disciplinary hearings, Soloveichik was fired from the paper, later continuing his plans for social transformation outside the journalistic sphere, in his new profession as a pedagogue.[137]

---

[134] 'Proizvodstvenno-tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia KP', 16/11/67, d.458, l.206. This was not just the case at KP: see *Pravda* Party Meeting, TsAOPIM, f.3226, op.1, d.79, ll.2-16.
[135] S. Soloveichik, 'Metod Shatalova' KP 3/11/71, 2, 4.
[136] Inna Rudenko has written extensively about this: see 'Za 'abstraktnyi'', 120-121; 'Nado pomnit', chto est' liudi, kotorye luchshe tebia.' in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: Olma-press, 2003), 762 and 'Vy blestiashchii uchitel', u vas prekrasnye ucheniki!' <http://madan.org.il/node/815> [Accessed: 15 March 2011].
[137] Soloveichik, *Posledniaia*, p.45.

3.2 Selling Komsomolka

On October 18, 1964, *Pravda* announced that subscription limits for central newspapers and journals would be abolished.[138] This was not a decision that made the headlines in the Soviet press, unlike in the United States (where a photograph of reformist economist Evsei Liberman appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine), but it was to exert a profound influence on the future direction of the Soviet media.[139] Although newspapers in the early 1960s had been encouraged to compete with each other, this had little meaning when the overall winner was decided by planners. But now that circulations were to be allowed to rise and fall with demand, journalists were about to find out how popular their titles really were.

Before 1965, the vast majority of Soviet newspapers were sold through subscriptions organised by the official distributor, *Soiuzpechat'*, which took a cut of each subscription arranged. Only around ten per cent of the circulation came through retail.[140] But due to paper shortages, demand was far higher than supply. This meant that *Soiuzpechat'* could force readers to subscribe to a 'bundle', which paired an uninteresting title, like *Civil Aviation*, with a more popular one, like *Radio*. One disgruntled reader complained that: "It's easier to win the state lottery than to get a subscription you want".[141] Moreover, state officials were granted priority in subscribing. Bureaucrats could obtain popular titles for themselves with state money, leading some KP journalists to demand controls to ensure a more equitable distribution of the paper.[142]

There were periodic attempts to change the retail base of the press. As early as 1955, subscription limits were periodically allowed to mirror reader interest, but it seems that the market was allowed to decide only a small proportion of the circulation, with the rest being dictated from above.[143]

---

[138] 'Million obshchestvennykh rasprostranitelei pechati' *Pravda* 18/10/64, 6.
[139] On the rationale for the reform (though not specifically the removal of subscription limits) see Michael Kaser, 'Kosygin, Liberman, and the Pace of Soviet Industrial Reform' *The World Today* 21/9 (1965), 375-88.
[140] 'Spravka o kolihestve ekzempliarov gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, vydeliaemykh dlia roznichnoi prodazhi v 1958 g.', 16/10/58, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.929, l.52.
[141] 'The Subscriber Complains' *Literaturnaia gazeta* 22/12/56 in CDSP 8/52, 33-34.
[142] Hopkins, 137-138; 8/10/56, d.176, ll.127-129, 132, 146.
[143] See Psurtsev to Khrushchev, 8/3/55, RGANI f.5, op.16, d.712, l.34.

Several years later, in 1958 and 1959, the regime took more concerted action to place the Soviet press on a firmer financial footing by issuing a number of resolutions that standardised salaries and placed restrictions on the publication of unprofitable titles.[144] One reason was that the supply of paper was unable to keep pace with growing demand. In 1959, the editors of KP sent a dossier featuring dozens of complaints from readers unable to subscribe to the Komsomol Central Committee.[145] A year later, the paper situation was so critical that there were fears that a number of newspapers in the Russian republic might be forced to cease publication.[146] For want of paper, propaganda literature publicising the party's policies went unpublished; in 1961 and 1962, Russian officials were forced to choose between printing exercise books or newspapers; numerous requests to open new newspapers had to be turned down.[147] A second reason was financial. A resolution issued by the Central Committee in the summer of 1959, "On the liquidation of losses in newspapers and journals," called for the closure of unprofitable publications, thus freeing up paper and filling the nation's coffers. The number of newspapers, which had grown almost 400 per cent between 1953 and 1957, fell 40 per cent between 1958 and 1962, breaking a twenty-year trend of unbroken rises.[148] But overall *circulations* rose by 35 per cent, meaning that readers were increasingly concentrated in profitable central publications.[149] Thus, the decision of October 1964 to eliminate subscription limits illustrates a relative calming of the waters with regard to paper provision (though problems with paper supplies still remained evident) and a desire to increase profits.[150]

---

[144] Postanvleniia TsK KPSS: 'Ob izlishestvakh v raskhodovanii sredstv gosudarstvennymi i obshchestvennymi organizatsiami na vypusku gazet i zhurnalov', 15/11/58; 'O sokrashchenii vypuska besplatnoi literatury', 11/2/59**;** 'O likvidatsii ubytochnosti gazet i zhurnalov', 31/7/59**;** 'O merakh po uluchsheniiu rozichnoi prodazhi gazet i zhurnalov', 1/10/59 in *Sovetskaia pechat' v dokumentakh*, ed. by N. Kaminskaia (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961), pp.297, 298-299, 301-306, 309-310.

[145] See 'Pis'ma chitatelei o pomoshchi v oformlenii podpiski na gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda*', September-October 1959, d.261 and d.262.

[146] RGASPI, f.5, op.34, d.72, ll.111-118; Stepakov/Stukalin (17/11/61) RGANI, f.5, op.34, d.92, ll.142-143.

[147] RGANI, f.5, op.34, d.72, ll.111-118, d.111, ll.4-6.

[148] See Mark Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (New York: Pegasus, 1970), pp.94, 191.

[149] Ibid.

[150] E.g. Kuprikov to Chkhikvishvili, 3/1/66, RGANI, f.5,op.33, d.224, l.125.

The abolition of *dirigisme* in the press sector after 1964 was accompanied by a change in quantitative measures of a newspaper's quality. In the past, the quantity of letters received had provided such a measure: journalists reported back to the authorities on the size of the paper's postbag and the proportion of letters that responded directly to the paper's articles. More letters ostensibly meant that the paper had 'improved'.[151] But, as so often in the Soviet Union, once workers were given a plan to fulfil, they often found novel ways of achieving it. Letters were not a reliable measure of a newspaper's popularity, but a measure of the paper's success in producing *the impression of popularity*. We saw an example of this in the previous chapter: in 1964 the IOM ran two competitions with the express purpose of increasing the size of the paper's postbag. Doing so increased the number of letters received that year by over a fifth.[152]

Journalists quickly understood that circulation figures had supplanted letters as a means for measuring popularity. It was, according to one report of the KP Party Organisation, the "most convincing evidence" of the paper's popularity amongst young people.[153] Deputy Editor Boris Pankin said of the 1965 subscription campaign:

> The results of the subscription campaign and the circulation of the paper tell us how readers judge the work of our paper, and the work of every one of us. It is an all-Union election, if you like. I don't think that any of us can be indifferent to its results. If before we were behind a brick wall, a limit, and thought "open the gate and we'll sign up twenty-million", then now the time has come for realistic, sober assessments.[154]

---

[151] See, for example, 'Perepiska s redaktsiei gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda* po soderzhaniiu publikuemykh v gazete materialov, informatsii o pis'makh, otklikakh i predlozheniiakh chitatelei', January-December 1954, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.764; 'Perepiska s redaktsiei gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda* po soderzhaniiu publikuemykh v gazete materialov, informatsii o pis'makh, otklikakh i predlozheniiakh chitatelei', January-November 1955, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.798; 'Doklad redkollegii gazety "Komsomol'skaia pravda" na torzhestvennom sobranii komsomol'tsev i molodezhi Moskvy, posviashchennom vykhodu 10-tysiachnogo nomera', undated, 1958, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.929, ll.1-20.

[152] B.A. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia. Zhizn' 2-aia: Epokha Brezhneva* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001), p.17.

[153] 'Otchetnyi doklad o rabote partbiuro', after 29/9/65, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.40, l.25.

[154] 21/9/65, d.385, l.68.

By calling the battle for sales an "election", Pankin illustrated the changed – and by implication *democratic* – relationship between reader and journalist. Leningrad sociologist and media executive Boris Firsov wrote in a *Zhurnalist* article that "by depositing [внося] their money for subscriptions, readers in some way give their vote to the publications which answer most keenly to the themes of the day, stand at the centre of events, and answer the multi-faceted demands of readers".[155] While in the past readers were understood as pupils learning from their more worldly wise journalist-teachers, now the roles were reversed, with the paper in the role of student: "We now find ourselves in examination season", said Pankin, warning that "if the student who crams before exams is bad, the student who sits in the exam hall with his arms crossed is not much better".[156]

With the help of the Komsomol and *Soiuzpechat'*, the press distribution agency, KP employed all possible means to ensure that subscriptions were increased in 1965. Most important among these was the creation of an editorial department, the 'Department of the Youth Press, Distribution, and Mass Work', which was devoted to increasing subscriptions.[157] Amongst its initiatives were a ten-day festival of the youth press in Leningrad, reader conferences in various cities, meetings in factories, construction sites, and educational institutions, an 'agit bus', which toured the country, and travelling brigades of poets.[158] On the initiative of the Komsomol, advertisements appeared in the press, and on radio and television, while posters and banners were displayed.[159] Komsomol members were forced to 'voluntarily' subscribe to Komsomol publications, while those Komsomol organisations that failed to assist in the campaign were criticised for having "failed to see in [the campaign] the enormous possibility for

[155] Boris Firsov, 'Massovaia kommunikatsiia', *Zhurnalist* 2 (1967), 51.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Pankin to TsK VLKSM, 1966, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.440, ll.1-2.
[158] Ibid.
[159] B. Solov'ev to TsK VLKSM, 13/12/65, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.1213, ll.145-151; V. Riabov to Agitprop VLKSM, 12/1/65, Ibid. d.1213, ll.176-181; 'Proizvodstvenno-tvorcheskoe soveshchanie o rabote KP', 16/11/67, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.458, l.68.

carrying out work on the Communist formation [воспитание] of youth".[160] They had also failed to see that increasing subscriptions to its publications was "one of the most important means for replenishing the Komsomol budget".[161] Prizes were offered to the Komsomols who proved most successful at encouraging young people to sign up as subscribers, while the press was encouraged to publish laudatory articles to the new Stakhanovites of distribution.[162]

The paper's rapid increase in circulation – it added almost one-and-a-half million readers in the year following the reform – was in large part down to this ability to enlist the paper's apparatus and institutional connections in the service of increasing the readership.[163] As such, the introduction of market forces into the press saw Soviet journalists turn to methods that represented a distinctively Soviet version of the blanket marketing of the capitalist world.

3.3 Sociology and the 'Mass Reader'

As Pankin's reference to journalists finding themselves in 'examination season' suggests, the move towards market principles gave readers the power to confer on journalists prestige or dishonour by a small act of consumer choice.[164] This made it especially important for journalists to know more about the tastes of those consumers, and it was the newly-rehabilitated science of sociology that stepped into the breach. By 1965, a Komsomol circular stated that "[s]ystematic, solidly organised study of readers' interests, and the reaction of

---

[160] 'O khode podpiski na tsentral'nye molodezhnye izdaniia', 29/10/66, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.419, l.13. My thanks to Sergei Zhuravlev and Natalia Kibita for discussing the obligation to subscribe to Komsomol publications with me.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., l.14; B. Solov'ev to TsK VLKSM, 13/12/65, RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.1213, ll.145-151.
[163] Figures on circulation: 'Otchetnyi doklad na rabote partbiuro', after 29 September 1965, TsAOPIM, f.1968, op.1, d.40, l.25. On the link between institutional apparatuses and rising circulations: Mikhail Nenashev, *An Ideal Betrayed: Testimonies of a Prominent and Loyal Member of the Soviet Establishment* (London: Open Gate Press, 1995), pp.50-51.
[164] On this question see also Susan Reid, 'Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernisation in the Soviet Home' *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47/1-2 (2006), 244-255; Joshua First, 'From Spectator to "Differentiated" Consumer: Film Audience Research in the Era of Developed Socialism (1965-80)' *Kritika* 9/2 (Spring 2008), 317-344.

young people to the most important articles needs to become the rule."[165] This thirst for reader information extended to the Party press. Between 1966 and 1968, all of the main newspapers of the Soviet Union (including *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, and *Trud*) carried out readership studies, compelling journalists to rethink their ideas about readers.

But although the regime's green light for sociological research was decisive, something else was needed for it to become a major factor. Even after the rehabilitation of Soviet sociology, editorial staff at KP were still lamenting their lack of knowledge of the reader. And yet there was no real impetus to launch a costly and time-consuming programme of research, given that fixed subscription limits made such knowledge a luxury rather than a necessity. The new press market changed the rules of the game. The inability of journalists and editors to navigate this unmapped territory and the intense competition for readers had forced newspapers to pay renewed attention to their readership, claimed one media sociologist.[166]

A number of articles in the professional press spoke of the need for more research of journalists' work, from the composition of editorial staff, the content of the paper, to readers' own use of media and even their feelings about what they had read.[167] KP, which benefited from the presence of the IOM at the paper, was amongst the first media outlets to incorporate sociological research into its work. In September 1965, Valentin Chikin presented the results of a survey of almost five-hundred lapsed subscribers in several large cities across the USSR.[168] The IOM found that, while just over half of subscribers did so for reasons not to do with the paper's content (e.g. a lack of money to pay for

---

[165] 'K vystupleniiu na soveshchanii zhurnalistov, pishushchikh na moral'no-eticheskuiu temu' (1965) RGASPI, f.1M, op.32, d.1185, ll.107-108.

[166] V.E. Shliapentokh, ed., *Chitatel' i gazeta. Vyp. 1: Chitateli "Truda"* (Moscow: ISKI AN SSSR, 1969), pp.11-12.

[167] For an overview of such research see Nils Hartley Wessell, 'The Credibility, Impact and Effectiveness of the Soviet General Press: An Analysis of Soviet Research on the Soviet Non-Specialized Newspaper'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Columbia University, 1972. On the use of psychology in reader studies see Valentin Kuzin. 'Issledovanie razrushaet stereotipu' *Zhurnalist* 1 (1967), 9.

[168] 7/9/65, d.385, ll.58-62. Full results were never published, though scattered fragments were printed in KP. Other results were announced in editorial and Party meetings, while others are held within the personal archive of IOM founder Boris Grushin. A particularly glaring absence is any systematic data on the demographics of the paper's readership.

subscriptions or a lack of timeliness in delivery), more than a third believed that the paper had become less interesting.

Upon hearing the results, editor Iurii Voronov argued that the paper was losing readers because it was becoming too highbrow. He scorned the idea that the paper should try to rival *Literaturnaia gazeta*, a newspaper with a circulation almost ten times smaller than KP's: "We are a mass newspaper and we need every one of us, every worker to learn to look at the paper through the eyes of the mass reader".[169] Reference to this 'mass reader' occurs frequently in journalists' conversations. There is ample evidence of journalists employing the term across the 1950s and 1960s.[170] But the idea of the readership as a homogeneous public was beginning to be challenged by sociologists, who argued that journalists should recognise that their paper was read by diverse social groups with diverse interests. A Komsomol report of 1966 stated that "Today's newspaper can no longer orient itself towards the 'average' reader. It simply doesn't exist. There are defined groups of youth with professional, age, and educational differences".[171] The findings of newspaper sociologists mirrored those of film sociologists, who increasingly sought to overturn widely-held ideas about the mass audience by suggesting that audience perception of films was stratified by socio-demographic criteria.[172] In doing so, these film sociologists both challenged the authority of film critics, and posited the spectator as an object of knowledge (knowledge created by the sociologist), rather than the subject of a the film text (knowledge created by the critic). The report cited above would suggest that this process was carried into the Soviet press, too.

However, because sociologists at KP doubled as journalists, the comparison between the paper's in-house sociologists and film sociologists is not like-for-like. Although KP's sociologists recognised the divisions within the

---

[169] Ibid., ll.60-62.
[170] E.g. 6/5/57, d.193, l.38; Party meeting, 29/6/62, *Izvestiia letuchka*, 19/5/58, GARF f.R1244, op.1, d.186, l.3.
[171] 'Zadachi komitetov komsomola po usileniiu rukovodstva molodezhnoi pechat'iu, redaktsiami radio i televideniia', 1966, RGASPI, f.1M, op.34, d.52, l.22. See also Iurii Kurganov, Tamara Kharlamova 'Anketa protiv mifa.' *Zhurnalist*, 7 (1967), 32-33.
[172] First, 322.

newspaper readership, they were nevertheless keen to retain the concept of the 'mass reader', which they associated with the transformative power of the press. Ervant Grigor'iants, one of the IOM's leading researchers, spoke in 1966 of the "paradox of the seven million": that the paper was read by the advanced [подготовленный] and literate reader", but also by a fifth or sixth grade student.[173] One might have expected Grigor'iants, as a sociologist, to advocate an increased differentiation of material – indeed, at the very same meeting, Grigorii Oganov pointed out that "nobody reads the newspaper from cover to cover" [от корки до корки], and suggested that journalists should be relaxed about this fact.[174] However, Grigor'iants also spoke as a journalist, and it was in this capacity that he called Oganov's approach "fatalistic".[175] He admitted that it would be "hard to find the reader who read all the way through the paper," but nevertheless concluded that this was what the paper should strive for.[176]

Two years later, another IOM researcher, Anna Pavlova, criticised colleagues, saying that: "We have the tendency to disseminate the tastes of the intelligentsia to society as a whole and that has its psychological costs" [это дает свои психологические издержки].[177] Speaking as a sociologist, she listed the ways in which the paper's readership was stratified, and argued that the paper needed to find a different approach for both intellectuals and women with lower educations. Yet, speaking as a journalist, Pavlova lamented the fact that readers under the age of twenty didn't enjoy reading "serious" articles. She called for a campaign to create a "serious reader" and claimed, paraphrasing Pushkin, that a good newspaper, like a good novel, should always be "a bit boring".[178] Thus, in this case, we see that sociological research did not necessarily coincide with the abandonment of the desire to transform readers. In the context of the Brezhnev period, the rhetoric of the 'mass reader' signified not only the need for the paper to become more appealing to its audience, but also the need for journalists to retain their sense of the readership *as a public*.

---

[173] 18/10/66, d.438, l.23.
[174] Ibid., l.2.
[175] Ibid., l.26.
[176] Ibid.
[177] 16/11/67, d.458, l.82.
[178] Ibid., ll.86-88.

Nevertheless, the concept of the 'mass reader' could also lead to an intolerance of deviations from the mean – which now included intellectuals. Grigorii Oganov, who, three years before, had lauded the reader as "more intellectual" than journalists had thought, by 1965 came under attack from colleagues for his high-minded writing style:

> I think that many of our readers are incapable of grasping the article in its entirety, and I found out that even some of our comrades didn't manage. The reader of the article was a very particular one, and not a very wide one. I think that in raising serious themes we need to strive to write so that articles are addressed to as wide an audience as possible.[179]

The paper's more 'literary' journalists countered this viewpoint: "for the audience to whom the article was addressed, it was written precisely and clearly … It did its job," argued science correspondent Dmitrii Bilenkin, and others, including *publitsist* Inna Rudenko, agreed .[180]

However, research by the IOM was beginning to support these attacks on 'intellectual' material. A rubric called "100 lines by a *publitsist*," which published *belletristic* material by the paper's correspondents, was highly praised by journalists at the paper, yet surveys showed that readers ranked it as one of the paper's five least popular features, an unhappy group which also included 'Workers' Planning Meeting' and 'Calendar of Economic Reform'.[181] The essayistic material most beloved of journalists was being ignored by readers. Respondents also complained that articles were too long – another product of the uneasy marriage between literature and journalism. One reader whose subscription had lapsed said that he had "no time to read a paper which is full of long articles".[182] Yet journalists, consciously or unconsciously, set much store by the length of material, and it was difficult to purge them of such habits. One KP correspondent, speaking at a meeting in 1967, talked sarcastically about the prestige that was attached to wordy articles: "If a piece [кусок] is long I don't read it, but I go and congratulate [the journalist]: well done, it's good …" He spoke of the "psychological attraction to large pieces"

[179] 17/8/65, d.385, l.15.
[180] Ibid. ll.24-25.
[181] 1/6/66, d.430, l.6; HIA, Box 4, Folder 5.
[182] Ibid.

while a small piece was considered to be a mere "trifle" [мелочь] or "a garnish".[183] At the same meeting, Zharov argued that material needed to be more brief, but added that a "psychological revolution in the minds of journalists," was taking place at a paper where the rule had always been "twelve pages, never write less".[184]

Nevertheless, journalists at KP appear to have encountered great difficulty in finding a popular form which appealed to the 'mass reader', was ideologically acceptable, and professionally praiseworthy. According to one IOM survey, the most frequently read genre was one that journalists rarely printed, and condemned as sensationalistic: court reports.[185] This illustrates a crucial question about the rhetoric of the reader-consumer in the Soviet press: how far could journalists go towards satisfying the tastes of readers who were, apparently, as interested in sensations as they were in moral edification? Before 1964, journalists tended to talk about sensations in negative terms: as an inadmissible excess in the search for popularity, and as a fundamental part of bourgeois 'yellow journalism'.[186] By 1966-67, however, journalists were criticising a lack of them and demanding material that would ensure that, as Kondakov put it, readers were "tearing the paper from [their] hands".[187]

However, journalists found it difficult both to keep their material within acceptable limits and attract readers' attention. Though there remained a great distance between the 'bourgeois' model of celebrity news and scandals and the content of the Soviet press, reprimands handed out to *Sovetskaia Rossiia* in 1965 for articles on kidnapping and drug addiction showed how journalistic values

---

183 'Proizvodstvenno-tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia o rabote KP', 16/11/67, d.458, l.118.
184 Ibid., ll.2, 116.
185 HIA, Box 4, Folder 5. The priority accorded to this rubric equally suggests that the public was concerned about crime, and wanted to read more about it, though this, in its own way, implies a sensationalist desire to be outraged. On this point see Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), esp. pp.44-48, 179-184.
186 'Otchet o rabote partiinogo biuro redaktsii "Izvestii" s dekabria 1960 po avgust 1961 gg.', TsAOPIM, f.453, op.2, d.32, l.45.
187 26/4/66, d.427, l.47. See also 'Proizvodstvennoe-tvorcheskoe soveshchaniie o rabote KP' 16/11/67, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.458, l.139; 'Proizvodstvenno-tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia o rabote "Komsomol'skaia pravda" v 1968 g.', 16/11/67, d.458, l.139. See also Mark Karpovich. 'Pozvol'te byt' pristrastnym …' *Zhurnalist*, 9 (1967), 48–49. On negative understandings of 'sensationalism' see Wolfe, pp.26-28.

were changing under the pressure of reader demand.[188] An editorial published in *Sovetskaia pechat'* in 1966 talked about the "dark sides" of the "pursuit of subscriptions" amongst some publications.[189] While agreeing that it was "completely natural and correct" that publications were profitable, the editorial nevertheless asked whether it was "correct to construct a publication purely on a commercial basis". "What won't journalists do for an "increase" in circulation?" it asked. "They look for any old peculiarity [диковинки] so as to capture the imagination of the reader". Worse still, "the creative pen of certain capable journalists gradually begins to adjust to this demand: to attract readers, to strike them with an unusual photograph, to cater [угодить] to them with something peculiar, to satisfy [потрафить] what are, in effect, sometimes backward interests."[190]

Thus, the ultimate effect of the twin assault of markets and social science on the world of journalism between 1964 and 1968 was subtle but far-reaching. Journalists began to conceive of their readers as individuals whose attention could not be taken for granted, lest they turn towards other sources of information. "The majority of people", argued KP correspondent Vladimir Orlov, "by virtue of the fact that they have an enormous number of newspapers, magazines … the television screen, radio broadcasts, the cinema, books, and a lack of time, must read and watch selectively." He added that: "Through their selection, readers spontaneously define what is most interesting for them".[191] The language of 'choice', and of reader 'interest' is striking. Orlov's imagined reader showed discernment in choosing between different titles, and this choice was not to be denigrated, but accommodated by media producers. However, this new concept of the audience had increasingly shed the socially progressive terms of reference that defined the early 1960s, and now defined readers in language that painted them as consumers.

---

[188] See Wolfe, pp.112-113. See also Viktor Perel'man, *Pokinutaia Rossiia: Zhurnalist v zakrytom obshchestve. 2-e izd.* (Tel Aviv: Vremia i my, 1977), 170-171.
[189] 'Otvetstvennost pered chitatelem.' SP 7 (1966), 1–2.
[190] Ibid., 2.
[191] 18/10/66, d.439, l.2.

Conclusion

The story of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*'s changing relationship to the reader might seem to be a peculiarly Soviet affair. After all, Soviet journalists' lack of knowledge about readers was the result of a specifically Soviet mistrust of sociological research and stemmed from a financial model that for a long time rendered circulation data unimportant. It was, moreover, a media system that placed a heavy premium on moral and educational content, in the service of creating a new, specifically Soviet, kind of individual.

And yet there was a form of Western journalism that sought to do the same: 'public service' broadcasting. In the United States, NBC and CBS held town-hall debates, and produced documentation to help educate readers in democratic citizenship.[192] In Britain, Lord Reith developed his notion of broadcasting as an educational, culture-forming, morally upright, and defiantly non-commercial undertaking.[193] And in the Netherlands, the socialist broadcaster VARA produced uncompromisingly political and moral programming.[194] The historical trajectories of these nations differed, but in the broad outlines of change, there were remarkable similarities. The introduction of competition into media markets led the producers of public service media to question assumptions about their audiences, leading to the realisation that prior conceptions of the audience as a homogeneous group, desiring cultural uplift (what Ien Ang has called the "normative public") were erroneous.[195] Broadcasters increasingly turned towards quantitative methods to understand their audiences. As a result, their commitment to serving the public gave way to a desire merely to capture audiences, bringing in its tow a search for more popular forms. This turn towards the popular led to the abandonment of the public service ethos.[196]

---

[192] Richard Butsch, *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp.84-94.
[193] Asa Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.53-58.
[194] Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking The Audience* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), pp.121-139.
[195] Ibid., pp.101-107.
[196] Ibid.; Michael Tracey, *The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.20-48.

It is important not to overemphasise the argument's applicability to the Soviet Union. Even though journalists began to question their beliefs about the reader, they never abandoned the conviction that a newspaper was an organ for transforming the individual and society. However, they increasingly felt that it was losing that focus. Even Tat'iana Agafonova, who worked in the Department of News lamented in 1969 that

> However business-like [деолвиты] and informational [информационны] the pages of our newspaper are, without our moral materials, in which we sit next to the reader, so to speak, try with our souls to explain to them their incorrect views [заблуждения] and errors – without that, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* … cannot exist. It's a shame that we are losing our great achievement.[197]

Could this sense of moral leadership survive the introduction of market forces? Ever since Allan Starodub reminded colleagues that readers' views did not always coincide with those of journalists upon seeing the IOM's first survey, there had been an increasing recognition that readers' views did not always coincide with those of journalists. This applied not just to political views, but also to tastes, which were changing in unexpected ways. Again, the West provides a helpful parallel. There, the saturation of the media landscape in the post-war period by commercial considerations and the democratisation of cultural consumption towards popular forms after World War II led to a transformed media landscape with greater choices, and more demanding consumers. This proliferation of media choices led to the terminal fracturing of the mass media audience, its ceasing to exist as a public. Writes Michael Tracey:

> The brute truth is that in an interactive communications system, the construction of which necessarily presupposes a significant increase in the amount of potential communications that are available, it is difficult, probably impossible, to have a patrician relationship with the audience. The relationship becomes one of providing the market with whatever the consumer might decide he or she needs.[198]

A similar process, albeit more modest, took place in the USSR. As Kristin Roth-Ey has shown, the post-war media landscape gave audiences choices. It allowed them to fashion themselves as subjects, to construct a mass media *bricolage*

---

[197] 10/9/69, d.488, l.2
[198] Tracey, p.49.

which seemed to fit their own identities.[199] Media producers responded in two, conflicting ways: on the one hand indulging in bouts of hand-wringing over the invasion of capitalist lowbrow culture, on the other, fighting to retain their audience in the recognition that audiences wanted certain things that media producers would have to provide.[200] As a result, the "natural audience" – a highly normative vision of a malleable mass awaiting transformation – was lost.[201]

The disappearance of this 'natural audience' had profound consequences for Soviet mass media, for with it went an entire constellation centred around media as a means for refining readers. But the ultimate consequence was not that the press became more populist – far from it. Over the course of the 1970s, newspapers became less focused on their readers, the experiments of the 1950s and 1960s having been comprehensively curtailed after the Prague Spring. The press's central role amongst Soviet mass media was squeezed between two incompatible impulses. The *written word* became the means by which ideological conformity was imposed, while *visual media*, such as television and film, were seized by an entertainment impulse which sought to provide a coherent vision of an ideologically 'normalised' regime.[202] While KP and other youth papers continued to adhere to the tried-and-tested formula of debates on moral and ethical issues well into the 1980s[203], they were no longer accompanied by the optimistic sense that they were changing society by doing so. When journalists regained that belief in the late-1980s, their energies were aimed neither towards the creation of a new model individual, nor towards new

---

[199] Roth-Ey, pp.71-130; Sudha Rajagopalan, *Leave Disco Dancer Alone: Indian Cinema and Soviet Movie-Going After Stalin* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2008).
[200] Roth-Ey, *Moscow*.
[201] The term "natural audience" comes from Ang, pp.121-139.
[202] On the link between television and normalisation in Czechoslovakia see Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). On the Soviet context see Elena Prokhorova, 'Fragmented Mythologies: Soviet TV Mini-Series of the 1970s' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2003; Sergei Oushakine, 'Crimes of Substitution: Detection in Late Soviet Society' *Public Culture* 15/3 (2003), 426-451.
[203] Natalia Roudakova, 'Bringing Culture Back Into the State: A Post-structural Look at the Soviet Press'. Unpublished m/s, 2009.

forms of sociality within the socialist system, but towards the promotion of a set of values that would undermine the fundamental tenets of Soviet power.[204]

[204] Wolfe, pp.143-175.

CONCLUSION | **A Compass in the Sea of Life: Journalists and their Public Before and After the Prague Spring**

> … [T]he newspaper must be a compass in the sea of life; it must give answers to life's complex questions, and help [readers] come to terms with themselves [разобраться внутри себя], with their "I", with how to form themselves, with how to make a life. It must be a compass in the social world [в мире общественном], a compass in the political world, and it must teach them to look at the world with true eyes [правильными глазами смотреть на мир].[1]
>
> (Elena Bruskova, 1967)

At the start of the Brezhnev era, journalists began to lose their sense of the 'natural audience' as a combined effect of the introduction of market forces, and readers' changing requirements, yet they never lost the sense of the reader as an individual to be transformed. The idea of journalism as a guide to everyday life had exerted a grip on journalists since the Twentieth Party Congress. The Soviet newspaper would not merely be a medium for recounting recent events, but also a means for inculcating 'correct' individual, social, and political values. It would be a compass with which readers would navigate everyday life, and be steered through everyday moral quandaries to the safe shores of Soviet citizenship. It would enable readers to understand the world around them by providing them with the knowledge they needed to form educated opinions. Journalists moved away from Stalinist forms of rote learning and towards the more difficult task of nurturing individual and collective agency. They sought to communicate with their readers more directly and more sincerely; they would regain readers' trust by exposing actions they considered detrimental to the public good; they would promote the initiative of young people as the country sought to build Communism; and they would satisfy readers' 'right' to accurate information about the world in which they lived.

Journalists' vision of the newspaper's role in promoting social change was a very particular one. Though a number of *gazetchiki* sought to describe Soviet individuals in all their complexity, the dominant tendency was to present a normative view of the Soviet citizen. There remained a tendency towards

[1] 17/10/67, d.455, l.52.

hyperbole, with ordinary individuals having their blemishes airbrushed. Measured by this 'exemplary' yardstick, many 'ordinary' readers fell short: those who failed to serve as exemplars were mocked, and when their everyday worries were published, journalists sometimes expressed outrage that such anti-exemplars had been allowed publicity. This inability to talk about important issues that concerned readers in their everyday lives showed the limits of journalists' attempts to go 'closer to life'. For Soviet *gazetchiki*, journalism needed to represent the world as it was supposed to become, rather than as it was. A rift emerged between the injunction to describe the 'typical', on the one hand, and the need to more accurately represent the vicissitudes of everyday life, on the other. Debates over news illustrated the tensions within this position: both journalists and politicians recognised the need for wider and more timely news coverage, yet remained unable to put this into practice. Moreover, journalists' continued inability to provide a satisfactory image of the contemporary was indicative of an inability to imagine a compelling exemplar that would embody the values of a post-Stalin age.

This thesis has contributed to scholarly understanding of the post-Stalin period, not only by examining the content of the press, but also by analysing journalists as a distinct social group. The transformed political climate allowed journalists the opportunity to change the face of the Soviet press. The Twentieth Party Congress was both catalyst and agent in this process. It was a catalyst insofar as many of the conditions for the changes that overtook journalism after 1956 already existed: improved education, a sense of group identity, and intense discussion of professional priorities were present before Stalin's death. In this sense, the Congress merely hastened pre-existing processes of change. Yet, to the extent that it eliminated journalists' fear of innovation and served as proof of the Party's reformist instincts, the Congress can be considered an active agent in the press's reconstruction. In this second sense, therefore, the indistinctness of the Congress's messages had a transformative effect for, although these messages caused widespread confusion, their ambiguity demanded creative interpretations.

The changed post-1956 cultural climate allowed journalists to develop a shared set of values and beliefs in which they had considerable investment. Many of these beliefs, such as the idea of journalism as a tool to transform society, or the need for newspapers to interest readers, had existed under Stalin, but political interference prevented journalists from putting them into practice. After 1956, the 'rules of the game' remained unpredictable, but their increased regularisation allowed the collective at KP to exercise agency in transforming the profession. Indeed, this thesis has demonstrated the centrality of the collective to the process of change. The KP collective was home to prominent editors and star sketch-writers (such as Aleksei Adzhubei or Vasilli Peskov) but also to a large number of 'rank-and-file' journalists (some forgotten even by those who once worked at the paper); both groups played a significant role in drafting the paper's line.

The daily drafting of this line was both a private and public activity. It was public insofar as the collective was geared towards social transformation and its work heavily intertwined with the Party. It was private insofar as the newspaper was the end result of internal debates within individual *redaktsii*, which owed much to professional as well as political commitments. The case of KP suggests that the rigid division of Soviet society into public and private spaces (and the argument that Soviet society was becoming increasingly 'privatised') is questionable.[2] There was a continuum between 'public-ness' and 'privacy' that structured Soviet society, which the collective traversed. The *redaktsiia* was a 'public-private' space in which public objectives were pursued, but which also allowed for the fulfilment of private goals, such as professional advancement and personal friendships.[3] The 'spirit of the sixth floor' mentioned by journalist after journalist may be a cliché, but it is repeated often enough for us to suspect that it bears at least a passing relationship to reality.

---

[2] The argument on the 'privatisation' of Soviet society is made in Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.153-163.

[3] Shlapentokh, pp.133-134. On 'public-privacy' within the Soviet communal apartment see Katerina Gerasimova, 'Privacy in the Soviet Communal Apartment', in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by David Crowley, Susan E. Reid (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p.210.

Crucially, the lessening of political constraints led to a situation where journalists were much freer to produce content than under Stalin. In this way, they acted as intermediaries between the public and the political elite. The cases of the Kaluga Torch, the Communards, and the IOM suggest that messages were not just top-down, but could flow from the public to the Party via journalists, or, in the case of the IOM, from journalists to the Party. Soviet propaganda should therefore be considered not just as a series of messages and texts, but also as a practice: the end result of a negotiation between journalists and the Party, journalists and their audience (real or imagined), and between individuals within the profession.

* * *

Rocked by events in Prague, the Party sought to consolidate its hold on power by demanding constant transmission of the signs and symbols of Communist rule. In December 1969, Boris Pankin announced that the three main tasks of the paper in 1970 would be to cover the centenary of Lenin's birth, the twenty-fifth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, and Komsomol elections.[4] By 1972, the paper's primary tasks were to propagate Leninist propaganda, military propaganda, and material on Komsomol life.[5] Though the concept of Brezhnev-era "neo-Stalinism" is overstated, if the term is employed historically rather than pejoratively, then it might be said that, in its emphasis on exhortations of present-day unity and the glories of the past, there was something 'Stalinist' about the post-1968 press.[6] The binding mechanisms of citizen to state were now passive, with the press once again called upon to play a stabilising role rather than encouraging revolutionary transformation. To use Ron Suny's terms, its role was dogmatic rather than discursive.[7]

---

[4] 'Proizvodstvennoe soveshchanie KP – "Komsomolka-70"', 15/12/69, RGASPI, f.98M, op.1, d.492, ll.1-2.
[5] 'O gazete *Komsomol'skaia pravda*', after February 1972, RGASPI, f.1M, op.34, d.648, ll.3-5.
[6] Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity, and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994 [1982]).
[7] R.G. Suny, 'On Ideology, Subjectivity, and Modernity: Disparate Thoughts about Doing Soviet History' *Russian History/Histoire russe* 35/1-2 (2008), 253-255.

Only under Gorbachev did the balance shift back to the latter. During the Indian Summer of *perestroika* journalists' truth-telling capacities were placed at centre stage. They possessed the freedom to speak their minds, and the audiences and authority to match.[8] Journalists like Inna Rudenko wrote hard-hitting articles about the heavy toll of the war in Afghanistan; *Ogonek* published letters from the public, exposing a range of social problems and scandals, as well as articles reassessing the Soviet past.[9] Prominent journalists of the 1950s and 1960s found fame elsewhere: Boris Grushin returned from Czechoslovakia to work at the All-Union Institute of Public Opinion; Iurii Voronov was recalled from his exile in the DDR to become Minister of Culture; while Boris Pankin became the last Soviet Minister of Defence, presiding adeptly over the post-coup chaos of 1991, before becoming an Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Sweden. If ever there was a golden age for Soviet journalists, this was it.

But although the fall of Communism in theory granted journalists greater freedom, in practice, their situation fell far short of what they might have expected. The conditions of Communism had sustained as much as hindered journalists' high social standing. Communism gave journalists – and the intelligentsia as a whole – a public platform, a delegated authority, and, in a climate of limited, albeit expanding, media choices, a captive audience. After 1991, the foundations underpinning journalistic authority disappeared, too. Under Communism it had been possible to carve out a sphere of independent activity, however circumscribed, safe from political interference. Now, journalistic allegiances were subject to the vicissitudes of the market, leading journalists to describe themselves as prostitutes.[10] An alien new language of *"kompromat", "biznes"*, and *"marketing"* emerged. The protagonists of the Khrushchev era felt set adrift, while younger journalists accepted that

---

[8] Ivan Zassoursky, *Media and Power in Post-Soviet Russia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), p.12.
[9] On Ogonek, see *The Best of* Ogonyok: *The New Journalism of Glasnost*, Trans. Cathy Porter, ed. by Vitaly Korotich, Cathy Porter (London: Heinemann, 1990).
[10] Natalia Roudakova, 'From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of their Public after Socialism' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 2007; Svetlana Pasti, 'A New Generation of Journalists', in *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values*, ed. by Arja Rosenholm, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Elena Trubina (London: Routledge, 2010), pp.61-62, 67-68.

professionalism and corruption were connected.[11] A 2008 survey found that journalists were trusted by only six per cent of the population.[12]

To the *shestidesiatniki*, this loss of trust and values was profoundly demoralising. Zoia Krylova, who ran an advice column in the late-1960s, decried the bloodlust of modern journalism, and mused on the "thin layer of culture that divides people from predators, and how easy it is to strip it away".[13] Former Special Correspondent Lidia Grafova, who today heads an organisation devoted to defending migrants' rights, wrote that:

> To our freedom of speech, the authorities have replied: "freedom of rumour". The word 'human rights advocate' [правозащитник] ... today sounds like a diagnosis … Times have changed steeply [крутые наступают времена], and social morals have rolled downhill. One can do little more than return to articles on self-perfection. But who reads those today?[14]

There was a very real sense amongst the journalists who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s that the human values so central to their work had been lost. Inna Rudenko, still employed by the paper as a totem of journalistic professionalism, was asked by a group of young journalism students whether she thought it was easier to write under today's new conditions or those of the past:

> "In the new [conditions], of course," I wanted to say, thereby underlining to them, to young people, how easy it was today without censors. But, having thought about it, I said: "Both easier and harder". "Infotainment" – that's the slogan of the new Komsomolka (oh, this current passion for foreign words!). Information and diversion, in Russian translation. To me, that formula seems limited, impoverished. Is human life limited to information and diversion? In any case, my pen is not well inclined to such a formula.[15]

The opposition between those new values and those of the past were placed in sharp relief in 2009, when KP reprinted an edition that was first published half a century before. On New Year's Day 1960, the editors explained that Father

---

[11] Pasti, pp.65-67.
[12] Ibid., p.57.
[13] Zoia Krylova, 'Slovo, kotoroe vsegda so mnoi', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), p.79.
[14] Lidia Grafova, 'Eto byla zhizn' vzakhleb', in Ibid., pp.44–45.
[15] Inna Rudenko, 'Nado pomnit', chto est' liudi, kotorye luchshe tebia', in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003), p.762.

Christmas had left them the edition they saw in front of them, dated January 1, 2010. Fifty years later, Father Christmas once again worked his magic, bringing Komsomolka's editors an edition from 31 December, 2059.

The news stories from '2059' included information about a spacecraft containing extra-terrestrials that had landed on Red Square; about the Tunguska meteorite, which had apparently been found to be a spaceship … and about a special gel named "Pamela-5", which would enable women to go from a size AA to a size GG bust in just five minutes, without the need for an operation.[16] These stories were run-of-the-mill 'boulevard' sensations, with the story of "Pamela-5", in particular, illustrating the impossible feminine ideals of post-Soviet life, particularly when seen alongside the come-to-bed eyes of Valentina Kostina, a political science student from Kazan', who stared out hopefully from the back page in expectation of becoming 'Miss Komsomolka 2009'.[17] By contrast, the journalists of 1960 had imagined a discussion on whether singular possessive pronouns still had a place in the language, since their spirit was so alien to the collectivist values of 2010.[18] Their news from the future evinced an optimistic faith in science to change the world, describing life in a twenty-first century where a city had been built under the Pacific Ocean, extinct species had been reanimated, and video link-ups allowed individuals living far apart to see one another.[19] The difference between these two visions of the future is the difference between two distinct visions of journalism: one that sees itself as transforming its public; the other that seeks to amuse it. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* has thus shadowed long-term changes in the Russian press, moving from a vehicle of the Stalin cult, via the *romantika* of the Khrushchev period and the social activism of the Gorbachev years, to a populist tabloid that embodies the social values of the Putin era.

---

[16] KP 31/12/2009-7/1/2010, 8-9.
[17] KP 29/12/2009, 28. On women in post-Soviet media see Rebecca Kay, 'Images of the Ideal Woman: Perceptions of Russian Womanhood through the Media, Education and Women's Own Eyes', in *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, ed. by Mary Buckley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.77-98.
[18] 'Iazyk dolzhen stat' vroven' s vekom!' KP 1/1/60, 10.
[19] KP 1/1/1960, 7-10.

In his posthumously published autobiography, Simon Soloveichik mused on a journalist's civic responsibility:

> All my life I've known why I write, and I've never – not once – written an article just because I wanted to write an article. Or for a wage. To write in a newspaper for money is not possible, it's dishonourable. A script or a novel – that's a different matter … but a newspaper? No, a newspaper is holy. Can a person write poems for money? It's the same with a newspaper. You can't write poems for money because they're too personal, and you can't write in a newspaper for money because it's too social [слишком общественное]. Poems are very yours [очень твои], a newspaper is very not yours [очень не твоя].[20]

Soloveichik was writing at a time when the process of transition from the Soviet 'Komsomolka' to its post-Soviet variant was in full flow. His quotation posits an opposition between ethics and capital and, implicitly, between his vision of socially responsible journalism, and the forms of journalism that were becoming popular after the fall of Communism. However, while Soloveichik presents an opposition between money and morals, it may be that two, seemingly antinomic visions of the press actually sit side by side. In a study of the contemporary Russian business press, Natalia Roudakova has suggested that Russian newspapers are currently deadlocked between two concepts of the social: a neoliberal vision, devoted to the privatisation of individual experience, and a socialist one, which emphasises collectivist public values.[21] Even as the Soviet experience recedes from view, it seems that the model of journalism that it generated refuses to disappear.

[20] Simon Soloveichik, *Posledniaia kniga* (Moscow: Pervaia sentiabria, 1999), p.124.
[21] Roudakova, pp.293-378.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVES

Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow (GARF)

(State Archive of the Russian Federation)

f.1244R Redaktsiia gazety *Izvestiia*

f.10124 Soiuz zhurnalistov

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, Moscow (RGANI)

(Russian State Archive of Contemporary History)

f.5, op.16 Otdel propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS (1948-1956)

f,5, op.33 Dept. of Propaganda and Agitation TsK KPSS of the Republics (1956-62)

Otdel propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS (1965-66)

f.5, op.34 Otdel propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS po RSFSR (1956-62, 1964-66)

f.5, op.55 Ideologicheskii otdel TsK KPSS (1962-65)

f.72, op.1 Ideologicheskaia komissiia TsK KPSS

f.96, op.1 Redaktsiia gazety *Sovetskaia Rossiia*

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Dokumenty Komsomola i molodezhnykh organizatsii), Moscow (RGASPI-M)

(Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History – former Komsomol Archive)

f.1, op.2 Plenumy TsK VLKSM

f.1, op.5 Soveshchaniia TsK VLKSM

f.1, op.31 Obshchii otdel TsK VLKSM

f.1, op.32 Otdel propagandy i agitatsii TsK VLKSM (to 1965)

f.1, op.34 Otdel propagandy i agitatsii TsK VLKSM (1965 onwards)

f.9 Vserosiiskii pionerskii lager' *Orlenok*

f.98, op.1 Redaktsiia gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda*

Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Moskvy, Moscow (TsAOPIM)

(Central Archive of Socio-Political History of Moscow)

f.453, op.2 Partiinaia organizatsiia redaktsii gazety *Izvestiia*

f.1799 Partiinaia organizatsii redaktsii zhurnala *Sovetskaia pechat'*

f.1968, op.1 Partiinaia organiatsiia redaktsiia gazety *Komsomol'skaia pravda*

f.3223, op.1 Partiinaia organizatsiia redaktsiia gazety *Pravda*

f.3273, op.1 Partiinaia organizatsii redaktsii zhurnala *Kommunist*

Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, California

Boris Grushin Papers

Widener Library, Harvard University, Massachusetts

Harvard Study on the Soviet Social System

<http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/index.html>

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

Bol'shevistskaia pechat'

Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP)

Filosofskie nauki

Iunost'

Izvestiia

Kommunist

Komsomol'skaia pravda (KP)

Novyi mir

The Observer

Ogonek

Pravda

Rabotnitsa

RT

Sovetskaia pechat' (SP)

Sovetskaia Rossiia

Vestnik MGU: Seria XI (Zhurnalistika)

Voprosy filosofii

Zhurnalist

PRIMARY SOURCES

Adzhubei, Aleksei, *Te desiat' let* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1989)

——, ed., *Den' mira* (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1961)

Adzhubei, Rada, 'Reshaiushchii shag byl sdelan', in *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty.*, ed. by A. I. Volkov, M. G. Pugacheva and S. F. Iarmoliuk (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), pp. 14-45

Afiani, V. I., ed., *Apparat TsK KPSS i kul'tura, 1953-1957. Dokumenty* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2001)

Aimermakher [Eimermacher], Karl et al, eds., *Ideologicheskie Komissii TsK KPSS, 1958-1964. Dokumenty* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998)

Benderova, Vera, 'Sol' chuzhikh slez', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5*, ed. by B. S. Burkov and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), pp. 316–38

Blatin, Anatolii, 'U zhivotvornogo istochnika', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 2*, ed. by V. A. Miakushkov and N. P. Stor (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980)

Bogdanov, N., and B. Viazemskii, *Spravochnik zhurnalista* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1960)

——, *Spravochnik zhurnalista. 2-e izd.* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1965)

Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia: 2-e izd., 49 vols. (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1949-1958)

Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 3-e izd. 30 vols. (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1969-1978)

Borisova, Liudmila G., 'Puti sozdaniia obshchestvennogo mneniia pionerov i komsomol'tsev.' Doklad na Pedagogicheskikh chteniakh APN RSFSR, Moscow, March 1956.
<http://www.kommunarstvo.ru/index.html?/biblioteka/bibborput.html>
[Accessed: February 27 2011]

Burkov, B.S. and V.A. Miakushkov, eds., *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985)

Cherepakhov, M. S., ed., *Zhanry sovetskoi gazety* (Moscow: MGU, 1959)

Chernyshev, Viacheslav, 'Planeta u nas doma', in *Den' mira*, ed. by Aleksei Adzhubei (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1961), pp. 790-791

Dudel', S., 'Kritika i samokritika', in *Filosofskaia entsiklopediia. Tom 3*, ed. by F.V. Konstantinov (Moscow: Izd. "Sovetskaia entsiklopediia", 1964), pp. 94-95

Erunov, B. A., *Sila obshchestvennogo mneniia* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1964)

Filonovich, Iu., 'U samogo istoka', in *Den' mira*, ed. by Aleksei Adzhubei (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1961), pp. 768-770.

——, 'Istoriia odnoi knigi', in *Soldaty Slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 1*, ed. by A. A. Mandrugin and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976), pp. 299–317

Filosofskaia entsiklopediia. 5 vols., ed. by F.V. Konstantinov (Moscow: Izd. "Sovetskaia entsiklopediia", 1960-1970)

Fursenko, A. A., *Presidium TsK KPSS. Tom 1: Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanii. Stenogrammy* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004)

Gazman, Oleg, 'Kollektivnoe tvorcheskoe: Rasskaz o tom, kak rodilas' i razvivalas' metodika kollektivnogo tvorcheskogo vospitaniia', *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, 17 December 1987

Gor'kii, Maksim, and Mikhail Kol'tsov, eds., *Den' mira* (Moscow: Zhurnal'no-gazetnoe ob"edinenie, 1937)

Goriunov, Dmitrii, 'Delo vsei zhizni', in *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany Sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 5*, ed. by B. S. Burkov and V. A. Miakushkov (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), pp. 41-64

Gorky, Maxim, L. Auerbach, S. G. Ferin, eds., *The White Sea Canal*, Trans. Annabel Williams-Ellis (London: John Lane, 1935)

Grafova, Lidia, 'Eto byla zhizn' vzakhleb' in *Bol'she, chem gazeta*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006)

Gribachev, Nikolai, 'Novyi oblik planety', in *Den' mira*, ed. by Aleksei Adzhubei (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1961), pp. 12-14.

Grin, Alexander, *The Seeker of Adventure: Selected Stories* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979)

Grushin, Boris, *My vse vremia veli voiny za svoi predmet* (Nauchnyi fond im. G.P. Shchedrovitskogo) <http://www.fondgp.ru/lib/chteniya/x/pub/12> [Accessed: 21 July 2009]

——, *Mneniia o mire i mir mnenie: Problemy metodologii issledovaniia obshchestvennogo mneniia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967)

——, 'Gor'kii vkus ne vostrebovannosti', in *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia shestidesiatykh godov v vospominaniiakh i dokumentakh*, ed. by Gennady S. Batygin and S. F. Iarmoliuk (St. Petersburg: Russkii khristianskii gumanitarnyi institut, 1999), pp. 205-228

——, 'Obshchestvennoe mnenie', in *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia: 3-e izd.*, *Tom 18* (Moscow: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1974), pp. 242-243

——, ''Institut obshchestvennogo mneniia - otdel Komsomol'skoi pravdy'', in *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty.*, ed. by A. I. Volkov, M. G. Pugacheva and S. F. Iarmoliuk (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), pp. 46-64

——, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia: Zhizn' 1-aia: Epokha Khrushcheva* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001)

——, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia: Zhizn' 2-aia: Epokha Brezhneva* (Mosow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003)

——, 'Ne na tekh napali!', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 45–47

Iakovlev, A.N, *Sumerki. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Materik, 2005)

Iakovlev, Egor, 'Pressa ravna obshchestvennomu sostoianiiu', in *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty.*, ed.

by A. I. Volkov, M. G. Pugacheva and S. F. Iarmoliuk (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), pp. 258-271

Ignat'ev, Oleg, *Kak sbili sensatsiiu* <http://only-paper.ru/forum/24-5071-203038-16-1300528850> [Accessed: 10 November 2011]

Iurkov, A., 'V Baikale voda, u Baikala beda', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 133-142

Kak my stroili metro. Istorii metro im. L.M. Kagnovich (Moscow: Izd. 'Istoriia fabrik i zavodov', 1935)

Kaminskaia, N., ed., *Sovetskaia pechat' v dokumentakh* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961)

Khiltunen, Valerii, *Perevod s prostogo na russkii* (2002) <http://soob.ru/n/2002/10/c/10> [Accessed: 1 March 2011]

Khrushchev, Nikita, 'On the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Report at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, October 18, 1961', in *Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Charlotte Saikowski and Leo Gruliow (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 83–116

Kordonskii, Mikhail, *Vvedenie v kommunarskoe dvizhenie* <http://www.altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/5/22/1> [Accessed: 28 February 2011]

Korneshov, Lev, 'Ia ee liubil, a ona menia?', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 151-160

Kotlyar, A., *Newspapers in the USSR: Recollections and Observations of a Soviet Journalist* (New York: Research Program on the USSR, 1955)

KPSS o sredstvakh massovoi informatsii i propagandy. 2-e izd. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987)

KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK. Tom 9 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986)

'Kritika i samokritika', in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 2-e izd. Tom 23* (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1950), p. 515

'Kritika i samokritika', in *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 3-e izd. Tom 13* (Moscow: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1973), pp. 452-453

Krylova, Zoia, 'Slovo, kotoroe vsegda so mnoi', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 77–81

Lenin About the Press (Prague: International Organisation of Journalists, 1972)

Lenin, V.I., 'What is To Be Done?', in *Lenin About the Press* (Prague: International Organisation of Journalists, 1972), pp. 67-72

——, 'Where to Begin?', in *Lenin About the Press* (Prague: International Organisation of Journalists, 1972), pp. 72-106

Letopis' periodicheskikh izdanii SSSR 1966-1970. Chast' II (Moscow: "Kniga", 1967)

Mamleev, Dmitrii, ed., *Aleksei Adzhubei v koridorakh chetvertoi vlasti* (Moscow: Izvestiia, 2003)

Mandrugin, A. A., and V. A. Miakushkov, eds., *Soldaty Slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 1* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976)

Miakushkov, V. A., and N. P. Stor, eds., *Soldaty slova: Rasskazyvaiut veterany sovetskoi zhurnalistiki. Tom 2* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980)

Moskvichev, L. N., ed., *Sotsiologiia i vlast': Dokumenty i materialy, 1953-1968. Sbornik 1* (Moscow: Academia, 1997)

Nenashev, Mikhail, *An Ideal Betrayed: Testimonies of a prominent and loyal member of the Soviet Establishment* (London: Open Gate Press, 1995)

'Obshchestvennost'', in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia: 2-e izd.*, Tom 30 (Moscow: Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1954), p. 418

Pal'gunov, N. G., *Tridtsat' let: Vospominaniia zhurnalista i diplomata* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1964)

——, *Zametki ob informatsii* (Moscow: MGU, 1967)

Pankin, Boris, *Preslovutaia epokha: V litsakh i maskakh, sobytiakh i kazusakh* (Moscow: Voskresen'e, 2002)

Pel't, V. D., 'Korrespondentsiia' in *Zhanry sovetskoi pechati* (Moscow: MGU, 1959)

Perel'man, Viktor, *Pokinutaia Rossiia: Zhurnalist v zakrytom obshchestve. 2-e izd.* (New York; Jerusalem; Paris: "Vremia i my", 1989)

Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd zhurnalistov. Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960)

Poliakov, Iurii A., *Istoricheskaia nauka: liudi i problemy* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999)

Polveka na Mokhovoi (1947-1997) (Moscow: MGU, 1997)

Pozner, Vladimir, *Parting With Illusions* (London: Grafton Books, 1990)

Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo. Fevral' 1956 – nachalo 80-x godov. Tom 2 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia', 2003)

Ronina, Galina, 'My zhili ideiami obnovleniia', in *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka*, ed. by Liudmila Semina (Moscow: PoRog, 2006), pp. 47–49

Rudenko, Inna, 'V Moskve i daleko ot Moskvy', in *Polveka na Mokhovoi (1947-1997)* (Moscow: MGU, 1997), pp. 129–31

——, 'Nado pomnit', chto est' liudi, kotorye luchshe tebia', in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003), pp. 760–63

——, 'Vy blestiashchii uchitel', u vas prekrasnye ucheniki!' <http://madan.org.il/node/815> [Accessed: 15 March 2011]

Rutkevich, M. T., 'Mnogoe bylo predresheno', in *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia shestidesiatykh godov v vospominaniiakh i dokumentakh*, ed. by Gennady S. Batygin and S. F. Iarmoliuk (St. Petersburg: Russkii khristianskii gumanitarnyi institut, 1999), pp. 236-252

Saikowski, Charlotte, and Leo Gruliow, eds., *Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1962)

Semina, Liudmila, ed., *Bol'she, chem gazeta: Chistosedechnye priznaniia komandy shestogo etazha, sluzhivshei "Komsomolke" v 60-70-e gody proshlogo veka* (Moscow: PoRog, 2006)

Sergeev, Stanislav, 'Do i posle slavy', in *Polveka na Mokhovoi (1947-1997)* (Moscow: MGU, 1997), pp. 102–12

Shakhidzhanian, Vladimir, *Mne interesny vse liudi* <http://1001.ru/books/people/mivl24.htm> [Accessed: 11 March 2011]

Shatunovskii, Il'ia, 'Sdelal bol'she, chem mog, no men'she, chem khotel' in *Adzhubei v koridorakh chetvertoi vlasti*, ed. by Dmitrii Mamleev (Moscow: Izvestiia, 2003), pp. 40-50

——, 'Tretii', in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003), pp. 577–83

——, *Zapiski strelianogo vorob'ia* (Moscow: Voskresen'e, 2003)

Shetinskii, O.N, 'Iurii Petrovich Voronov: Vospominanie o druge', in *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by* (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003), pp. 350-355

Shlapentokh, Vladimir, *An Autobiographical Narration on the Role of Fear and Friendship in the Soviet Union* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004)

Shliapentokh, V. E., ed., *Chitatel' i gazeta: itogi izucheniia chitatel'skoi auditorii tsentral'nykh gazet. Vyp. 1: Chitateli "Truda"* (Moscow: IKSI AN SSSR, 1969)

Sidneva, N., ed., *Alyi parus* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1966)

Sinel'nikov, Roman, *Ostavliaiu vam na pamiat'... (Pesni kommunarov)* (Moscow: The Olympic Editorial, 1997)

Skakunov, Leonid, *Zhurfak 65-70* (Vladimir, 1999)

Skopina, Klara, 'Pauers – 43 goda posle provokatsii', *Nash sovremennik*, 12 (2003), pp. 218-228

Sokolov, Richard, 'V poiskakh "Nastoiashchei sotsial'noi pedagogiki"', *Na putiakh k novoi shkole*, 3 (2004)
<http://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/5/7/8/17/8.html#5> [Accessed: 13 November 2011]

Soloveichik, Simon, *Vospitanie tvorchestvom* (Moscow: Znanie, 1978)

——, *Posledniaia kniga* (Moscow: Pervoe sentiabria, 1999)

Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika. Vyp. 4 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1963)

Transactions of the Fourth World Congress of Sociology (Milan & Stresa, 8-15 September 1959). Volume III (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1961)

Tret'iakov, Sergei, 'The New Leo Tolstoy', *October*, 118 (2006), 45-50

Tvardovskii, Aleksandr, 'Speech at the 22nd Party Congress', in *Current Soviet Policies IV: The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Charlotte Saikowski and Leo Gruliow (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 188–90

Uledov, L. K., *Obshchestvennoe mnenie Sovetskogo obshchestvo* (Moscow: Sotsetgiz, 1963)

Verkhovskaia, A.I, *Pis'mo v redaktsiiu i chitatel'* (Moscow: MGU, 1972)

Volkov, A. I., M. G. Pugacheva, and S. F. Iarmoliuk, eds., *Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty.* (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000)

Zhdanov, A. A., 'Soviet Literature – The Richest in Ideas, the Most Advanced Literature'. Speech at the First Congress of Soviet Writers, Moscow, August 1934. <http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit_crit/sovietwritercongress/zdhanov.htm> [Accessed: 22 December 2010]

Zhiveinov, N., *Kapitalisticheskaia pressa SShA* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956)

Zhukov, Iurii, *Liudi 30-x godov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Sovetskaia Rossiia", 1966)

Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by (Moscow: "Olma-press", 2003)

SECONDARY SOURCES

Aimermakher [Eimermacher], Karl, 'Partiinoe upravlenie kul'turoi i formy ee samoorganizatsii (1953-1964/67)', in *Ideologicheskie Komissii TsK KPSS, 1958-1964. Dokumenty*, ed. by Karl Aimermakher [Eimermacher] et al (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998)

Alexopoulos, Golfo, 'Soviet Citizenship, More or Less: Rights, Emotions, and States of Civic Belonging', *Kritika*, 7/3 (2006), 487–528

Ang, Ien, *Desperately Seeking The Audience* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991)

Apor, Balázs et al, eds., *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc* (Macmillan, 2004)

Attwood, Lynne, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines As Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999)

Balina, Marina, and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style* (London: Anthem Press, 2009)

Barghoorn, Frederick, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964)

Barnhurst, Kevin, and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guildford Press, 2001)

Batygin, Gennady S., and Inna F. Deviatko, 'The Metamorphoses of Russian Sociology', in *Eastern Europe in Transformation: The Impact on Sociology*, ed. by Mike F. Keen and Janusz Mucha (Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp. 11-23

Batygin, Gennady S., and S. F. Iarmoliuk, eds., *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia shestidesiatykh godov v vospominaniiakh i dokumentakh* (St. Petersburg: Russkii khristianskii gumanitarnyi institut, 1999)

Bauer, Raymond A., Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhorn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956)

Beliaev, E., and P. Butorin, 'The Institutionalization of Soviet Sociology: Its Social and Political Context', *Social Forces*, 61/2 (1982), 418-435

Berger, Peter L., *Marxism and Sociology: View from Eastern Europe* (New York: Appleton Century, 1969)

Bertaux, Daniel, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch, eds., *On Living Through Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge, 2004)

Bittner, Steven V., *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2008)

Blium, Arlen, *Kak eto delalos' v Leningrade: tzenzura v gody ottepeli, zastoia i perestroiki* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2005)

Bonnell, Victoria, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999)

Bouvard, Josette, 'L'injonction autobiographique dans les années 1930. G.A. Medynskij et l'histoire du métro de Moscou' *Cahiers du Monde russe* 50/1 (2009), 69-92

Boym, Svetlana, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994)

Brandenberger, David, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011)

Bren, Paulina, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2010)

Breyfogle, Nicholas B., Abby Schrader, and Willard Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (London: Routledge, 2007)

Briggs, Asa, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Brintlinger, Angela, *Writing a Usable Past: Russian Literary Culture, 1917-1937* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), Studies in Russian Literature and Theory

Brooks, Jeffrey, 'Pravda Goes to War', in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. by Richard Stites (Bloomington, IN; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 9–27

——, *Thank You Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000)

Brown, Kate, 'Out of Solitary Confinement: The History of the Gulag', *Kritika*, 8/1 (2006), 67–103

Buchli, Victor, 'Modernism, and the Fight Against 'Petit-bourgeois' Consciousness in the Soviet Home', *Journal of Design History*, 10/2 (1997), 161–76

——, *An Archaeology of Socialism* (London: Berg, 2000)

Buckley, Mary, ed., *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Butsch, Richard, *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals* (New York: Routledge, 2008)

Buzek, Antony, *How the Communist Press Works* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964)

Bykov, Dmitrii, *Bulat Okudzhava* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2009)

Chatterjee, Choi, and Karen Petrone, 'Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective', *Slavic Review*, 67/4 (2007), 967–86

Childin, Marianna T., and Max Friedberg, eds., *The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989)

Clark, Katerina, 'Changing Historical Paradigms in Soviet Culture', in *Late Soviet Culture from Perestroika to Novostroika*, ed. by Thomas Lahusen and Gene Kuperman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 289-306

——, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual. Third Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000)

——, ''The History of the Factories' as a Factory of History: A Case Study on the Role of Soviet Literature in Subject Formation', in *Autobigraphical Practices in Russia - Autobiographische Praktiken in Russland*, ed. by Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2004), pp. 251–78

Clews, John C., *Communist Propaganda Techniques* (London: Meuthen, 1964)

Cohen, Stanley, and Jock Young, eds., *The Manufacture of News. Deviance, Social Problems & The Mass Media* (London: Constable, 1973)

Cohen, Stephen F., 'The Friends and Foes of Change: Reformism and Conservatism in the Soviet Union', in *The Soviet Union Since Stalin*, ed. by Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch and Robert Sharlet (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 11–31

Cohen, Stephen F., Alexander Rabinowitch, and Robert Sharlet, eds., *The Soviet Union Since Stalin* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980)

Condee, Nancy, 'The Cultural Codes of the Thaw', in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. by William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev and Abbot Gleason (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 160-176

'Conflict Between the Generations', in *The Soviet Cultural Scene 1956-1957*, ed. by Walter Z. Lacqueur and George Lichtheim (New York: Atlantic Books, 1958), pp. 202-214

Costanzo, Susan, 'The 1959 Liriki-Fiziki Debate: Going Public With the Private?', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp. 251-268

——, 'Amateur Theatres and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-1970', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 86/2 (2008), 372–95

Crowley, David, and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford: Berg, 2002)

Curry, Jane L., *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Dautova, R. V., 'Rol' sredstv massovoi informatsii v kul'turnom vzaimoobmene v period Khrushchevskoi 'ottepeli'', *Uchebnye zapiski Kazanskogo universiteta. Seriia: Gumanitarnye nauki*, 152/5 (2010), 91–100

Diment, Galya, and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993)

Dobrenko, Evgeny, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic for the Reception of Soviet Literature*, Trans. Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997)

——, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001)

——, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*, Trans. Jesse M. Savage (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007)

Dobrenko, Evgeny, and Eric Naiman, eds., *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle, WA: Washington University Press, 2003)

Dobson, Miriam, 'Anti-religious Campaigns in the Russian Press, 1953-1964' *Slovo* 13 (2001), 139-152

——, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009)

Dunham, Vera S., *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976)

Dzirkals, Lilita, Thane Gustafson, and A. Ross Johnson, 'The Media and Inter-Elite Communication in the USSR', Rand Corporation Report R-2869 (Santa Monica, CA, 1982)

Eaton, William J., 'Red Editor: Alexei Adzhubei', *Nieman Reports*, 16/2 (1963)

Edele, Mark, 'Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 50/1 (2002), 37–61

Eggeling, Vol'fram, *Politika i kul'tura pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve*, 1953-1970 gg. (Moscow: Airo-XX, 1999)

Ellis, Frank, 'The Media as Social Engineer', in *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 192–222

——, 'Review of Thomas C. Wolfe, 'Governing Soviet Journalism'', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 85/1 (2007), 165–67

Eremina, L. S., and E. B. Zhemkova, eds., *Korni travli: Sbornik statei molodykh istorikov* (Moscow: Zven'ia, 1996)

Etkind, Aleksandr, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011)

Evans, Christine, 'A "Panorama of Time": The Chronotopics of Programma "Vremia"', *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2010), 121–46

Fateev, A.V, *Obraz vraga v sovetskoi propaganda, 1945-1954 gg.* (Moscow: RAN, 1999)

Fel'dman, D. M., *Terminologiia vlasti: Sovetskie politicheskie terminy v istoriko-kul'turnom kontekste* (Moscow: Rosiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2006)

Field, Deborah A., *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007)

Firsov, Boris, *Istoriia Sovetskoi sotsiologii, 1950-1970-e gody* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Evropeiskogo universiteta, 2012)

First, Joshua, 'From Spectator to "Differentiated" Consumer: Film Audience Research in the Era of Developed Socialism (1965-80)', *Kritika*, 9/2 (2008), 317–44

Fisher, Ralph T., Jr., *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959)

Fitzpatrick, Sheila, 'Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Taste and Privilege', in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 216–37

——, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1992)

——, ''Social parasites': How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/1-2 (2006), 377–408

Foucault, Michel, 'What is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp. 101-120.

Fürst, Juliane, 'Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the Kompaniia Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp. 229–49

——, 'The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy between Stalin and Khrushchev', in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 135–53

——, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Gans, Herbert, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (London: Constance, 1980)

Gerasimova, Katerina, 'Privacy in the Soviet Communal Apartment', in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by David Crowley, Susan E. Reid (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 207-230

Gerol, Ilya, and Geoffrey Molyneux, *The Manipulators: Inside the Soviet Media* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1988)

Gilburd, Eleonory, and Larisa Zakharova, 'Avant Propos', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/1-2 (2006), 9-14

Ginzburg, Lydia, *On Psychological Prose*, Trans. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Giroud, Françoise, *Nouvelle Vague: Portraits de la jeunesse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958)

Gol'dfarb, Stanislav, *'Komsomol'skaia pravda' 1925-2005 gg.: Ocherki istorii* (Irkutsk: Irkutskaia oblastnaia tipografiia No.1, 2008)

Gorham, Michael S., *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003)

——, 'Tongue-Tied Writers: The Rabsel'kor Movement and the Voice of the "New Intelligentsia" in Early Soviet Russia', *Russian Review*, 55/3 (1996), 412–29

Goriaeva, Tat'iana, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v SSSR: 1917-1991 gg. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2009)

Gorsuch, Anne E., *Youth in Revolutionary Russia. Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000)

'Time Travelers: Soviet Tourists to Eastern Europe', in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. by Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 205–26

——, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad After Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Gorsuch, Anne E., and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Graber, Kathryn, 'Public Information: The Shifting Roles of Minority-Language News Media in the Buryat Territories of Russia', *Language and Communication*, 32 (2012), 124–36

Gronow, Jukka, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003)

Halfin, Igal, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2000)

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini, eds., *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

——, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Hanson, Stephen E., *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill, NC; London: North Carolina University Press, 1997)

Hellbeck, Jochen, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006)

Hellbeck, Jochen, and Klaus Heller, *Autobigraphical Practices in Russia - Autobiographische Praktiken in Russland* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2004)

Hicks, Jeremy, 'From Conduits to Commanders: Shifting Views of Worker Correspondents, 1924-1926', *Revolutionary Russia*, 19/2 (2006), 131–49

Hoffman, David A., *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity (1917-1941)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003)

Hollander, Gayle D., *Soviet Political Indoctrination: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda Since Stalin* (New York: Praeger, 1972)

Hopkins, Mark, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (New York: Pegasus, 1970)

Hudson Jr, Hugh D., 'Shaping Peasant Political Discourse during the New Economic Policy: The Newspaper "Krest'ianskaia Gazeta" and the Case of "Vladimir Ia."', *Journal of Social History*, 36/2 (2002), 303–17

Ilic, Melanie, Susan E. Reid, and Lynne Attwood, eds., *Women in the Khrushchev Era* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004)

Inkeles, Alex, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950)

Ivanov, D. V., 'Sotsiologiia v Rossii: Institutional'naia i kontseptual'naia struktura', in *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia: istoriia i sovremennye problemy*, ed. by N. G. Skvortsov, V. D. Vinogradov and N. A. Golovin (St. Petersburg: Izd. S. Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2007), pp. 107-125

Izmailova, Ninel', 'Adzhubei: talant — eto pozitsiia', *Chitaiushchaia Rossiia*, 1/1 (1994), 13–15

Johnson, A. R., and R. E. Parta, eds., *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2010)

Jones, Polly, ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London: Routledge, 2007)

——, 'I've Held, and I Still Hold, Stalin in the Highest Esteem': Discourses and Strategies of Resistance to De-Stalinisation in the USSR, 1953-62', in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by Balázs Apor et al (Macmillan, 2004), pp. 227–45

——, 'From the Secret Speech to the Burial of Stalin: Real and Ideal Responses to De-Stalinization', in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 41–63

Josephson, Paul R., *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997)

Kaganovsky, Lilya, *How the Soviet Man Was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity Under Stalin* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2008)

Kaser, Michael, 'Kosygin, Liberman, and the Pace of Soviet Industrial Reform' *The World Today* 21/9 (1965), 375-88

Kay, Rebecca, 'Images of the Ideal Woman: Perceptions of Russian Womanhood through the Media, Education and Women's Own Eyes', in *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, ed. by Mary Buckley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.77-98

Keen, Mike F., and Janusz Mucha, eds., *Eastern Europe in Transformation: The Impact on Sociology* (Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 1994)

Kelly, Catriona, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Kelly, Catriona, and David Shepherd, eds., *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

——, eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Kelly, Catriona, and Vadim Volkov, 'Directed Desires: Kul'turnost' and Consumption', in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, ed. by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 291–313

——, 'Obshchestvennost', Sobornost': Collective Identities', in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, ed. by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 26–27

Kenez, Peter, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

——, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001)

Kharkhordin, Oleg, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999)

Kokh, Alfred, and Igor Svinarenko, *A Crate of Vodka: An Insider View of the 20 Years that Shaped Modern Russia* (New York: Enigma Books, 2009)

Koltsova, Olessia, *News Media and Power in Russia* (London: Routledge, 2006)

Korotych, Vitaly, and Cathy Porter, eds., *The Best of* Ogonyok: *The New Journalism of Glasnost*. Trans. Cathy Porter (London: Heinemann, 1990)

Kosinova, Tat'iana, 'Sobytiia 1956 g. v Pol'she glazami sovetskikh dissidentov', in *Korni travli: Sbornik statei molodykh istorikov*, ed. by L. S. Eremina and E. B. Zhemkova (Moscow: Zven'ia, 1996), pp. 193–215

Kotkin, Steven, *Steeltown USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press)

Kozlov, Denis, 'Naming the Social Evil: the Readers of *Novyi mir* and Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*, 1956-59 and Beyond', in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Polly Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp. 80-98

Kozlov, Vladimir A., *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, Trans. and Ed. by Elaine McClarnand MacKinnon (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002)

Krementsov, Nikolai, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997)

Kruglak, Theodore E., *Two Faces of TASS* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1962)

Lacqueur, Walter Z., and George Lichtheim, eds., *The Soviet Cultural Scene 1956-1957* (New York: Atlantic Books, 1958)

Lahusen, Thomas, and Gene Kuperman, eds., *Late Soviet Culture from Perestroika to Novostroika* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993)

Lane, Christel, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - The Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

Lapierre, Brian, 'Private Matters or Public Crimes: The Emergence of Domestic Hooliganism in the Soviet Union, 1939-1966', in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), pp. 191–207

Lauk, Epp, and Tiiu Kreegipuu, 'Was It All Pure Propaganda?: Journalistic Practices of 'Silent Resistance' in Soviet Estonian Journalism', *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, 15 (2010), 167–90

Lehtmäki, Markku, Simo Leisti, and Marja Rytkönen, eds., *Real Stories, Imagined Realities: Fictionality and Non-Fictionality in Literary Constructs and Historical Contexts* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2007)

Lendvai, Paul, *The Bureaucracy of Truth: How Communist Governments Manage the News* (London: Burnett Books, 1981)

Lenoe, Matthew, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004)

Liljeström, Marianne, 'Monitored Selves: Soviet Women's Autobiographical Texts in the Khrushchev Era', in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Melanie Ilic, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), pp. 131–48

Lisann, Maury, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union: International Politics and Radio* (New York: Praeger, 1975)

Little, Alan M. G., 'Pavlov and Propaganda', *Problems of Communism*, 2 (1953), 14–21

Loewenstein, Karl, '*Obshchestvennost'* as Key to Understanding Soviet Writers of the 1950s: *Moskovskii Literator*, October 1956-March 1957', *Journal of Contemporary History* 44/3 (2009), 473-492

Lovell, Stephen, *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR, 1941 to the present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

Lyons, Louis M., ed., *Reporting the News: Selections from Nieman Reports* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1965)

Mally, Lynn, 'The Americanization of the Soviet Living Newspaper', *Carl Beck Papers*, 1903 (2008)

Markham, James W., *Voices of the Red Giants: Communications in Russia and China* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1967)

McNair, Brian, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London: Routledge, 1991)

McReynolds, Louise, 'Dateline Stalingrad: Newspaper Correspondents at the Front', in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. by Richard Stites (Bloomington, IN; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 28–43

Mespoulet, Martine, 'La 'renaissance' de la sociologie en URSS (1958-1972): Une voie étroite entre matérialisme historique et 'recherches sociales concretes'', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, 16 (2007), 57–86

Mickiewicz, Ellen P., *Media and the Russian Public* (New York: Praeger, 1981)

Mills, C. Wright, *The Sociological Imagination* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970)

Mitrokhin, Nikolai, 'Zametki o sovetskoi sotsiologii (po prochtenii knigi Borisa Firsova)', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 98 (2009), 111–22

Mlechin, Leonid, *Zheleznyi Shurik* (Moscow: Iauza, 2004)

Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000)

Mueller, Julie K., 'Staffing Newspapers and Training Journalists in Early Soviet Russia', *Journal of Social History*, 31/4 (1998), 851–73

Muhlmann, Géraldine, *A Political History of Journalism*, Trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)

Murray, John, *The Russian Press from Brezhnev to Yeltsin: Behind the Paper Curtain* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1994)

Naiman, Eric, 'On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars Who Make Them', *Russian Review*, 60 (2001), 307–15

Nelson, Michael, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997)

Nora, Pierre, *Les lieux de mémoire. 3 vols.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997)

Novikov, Nikolai, 'The Sociological Movement in the USSR (1960-1970) and the Institutionalization of Soviet Sociology', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 23 (1982), 95–118

Ogryzko, Viacheslav, 'Zhertva apparatnykh intrig', *Literaurnaia Rossiia*, 15 (16 April 2010)

Osipov, G.V, 'The Rebirth of Sociology in Russia: How It Actually Developed', *Russian Social Science Review*, 50/6 (2009), 80–108

Ostromoukhova, Bella, 'KVN - "Moldezhnaia kul'tura shestdesiatykh"?', *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 4/36 (2004), 34–39

——, 'Le Dégel et les Troupes Amateur: Changements politiques et activités artistiques des étudiants, 1953-1970', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/1-2 (2006), 303–26

Oushakine, Serguei, 'Crimes of Substitution: Detection in Late Soviet Society', *Public Culture*, 15/3 (2003), 426–51

Ovsepian, R.P, *Istoriia noveishei otechestvennoi zhurnalistiki* (Moscow: MGU / Nauka, 2005)

Papazian, Elizabeth A., *Manufacturing Truth: The Documentary Moment in Early Soviet Culture* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009)

Paperno, Irina, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2009)

Parsons, Talcott, 'Professions', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Vol. 12* (New York: Macmillan/Free Press, 1968), pp. 536-547.

Pasti, Svetlana, 'A New Generation of Journalists', in *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values*, ed. by Arja Rosenholm, Kaarle Nordenstreng, and Elena Trubina (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 57-75

Peer, Limor, 'The Practice of Opinion Polling as a Disciplinary Mechanism: A Foucauldian Perspective', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 4/3 (1992), 230-242

Petrov, Petre, 'The Freeze of Historicity in Thaw Cinema', *Kinokultura*, 8 (2005) <http://www.kinokultura.com/articles.apr05-petrov.html>

——, 'The Industry of Truing: Socialist Realism, Reality, Realization', *Slavic Review*, 70/4 (2011), 873–92

Pinkerton, William M., 'The Newspaperman', in *Reporting the News: Selections from Nieman Reports*, ed. by Louis M. Lyons (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1965)

Plamper, Jan, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012)

——, 'Abolishing Ambiguity: Soviet Censorship Practices in the 1930s', *Russian Review*, 60/4 (2001), 526–44

Pohl, Michaela, 'The Planet of One Hundred Languages: Ethnic Relations and Soviet Identity in the Virgin Lands', in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby Schrader and Willard Sunderland (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 238-261

Porter, William E., 'Journalism', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 8 (Macmillan/Free Press), pp. 265–72

Possony, Stefan T., *A Century of Conflict: Communist Techniques of World Revolution* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery, 1953)

Rabinow, Paul, ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)

Rajagopalan, Sudha, *Leave Disco Dancer Alone: Indian Cinema and Soviet Movie-Going After Stalin* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2008)

Raleigh, Donald, *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk About Their Lives* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006)

——, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Reid, Susan E., 'Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev', *Slavic Review*, 61/2 (2002), 211–52

——, 'Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernisation in the Soviet Home', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47/1-2 (2006), 227-268

——, 'Happy Housewarming!: Moving into Khrushchev-era Apartments', in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, ed. by Marina Balina and Evgeny Dobrenko (London: Anthem Press, 2009), pp. 133–60

——, ''Who Will Beat Whom?' Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959', *Kritika*, 9/4 (2008), 855–904

Remington, Thomas, *The Truth of Authority: Ideology and Communication in the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988)

Riha, Thomas, *Readings in Russian Civilization. Volume 3: Soviet Russia, 1917 to Present* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969)

Rosenholm, Arja, Kaarle Nordenstreng, and Elena Trubina, eds., *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Ross, Corey, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Roth-Ey, Kristin, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2010)

Rotkirch, Anna, ''What Kind of Sex Can You Talk About?' Acquiring Sexual Knowledge in Three Soviet Generations', in *On Living Through Soviet Russia*, ed. by Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, Anna Rotkirch (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 93-119

Roudakova, Natalia, 'Comparing Transitions: Media, 'Transitions,' and Historical Change', in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, ed. by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 246–77

Savkina, Irina, '"Am I Writing or Am I Being Written?": A Diary of a Young Soviet Woman (1968-1970)', in *Real Stories, Imagined Realities: Fictionality and*

Non-Fictionality in Literary Constructs and Historical Contexts, ed. by Markku Lehtmäki, Simo Leisti and Marja Rytkönen (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2007), pp. 289–303

Schattenberg, Susanne, ‘‘Democracy’ or ‘Despotism’?: How the Secret Speech was Translated into Everyday Life’, in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 64–79

Schmelz, Richard, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofiicial Music During the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Schramm, Wilbur, ‘The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press’, in *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press should Be and Do*, ed. by Fred S. Siebert (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 105–46

Shapiro, J., ‘The Soviet Press and the Problem of Stalin’ *Studies in Comparative Communism* 4/3-4 (1971), 179-209

Shlapentokh, Vladimir, *The Politics of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987)

——, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Siebert, Fred S., ed., *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press should Be and Do* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956)

Siegelbaum, Lewis H., ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006)

Sills, David L., ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968)

Simirenko, Alex, ‘The Development of Soviet Social Science’, in *Professionalization of Soviet Society*, ed. by Alex Simirenko and C. A. Kern Simirenko (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1982), pp. 67–81

Simirenko, Alex, and C. A. Kern Simirenko, eds., *Professionalization of Soviet Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1982)

Skradol, Natalia, 'Laughing with Comrade Stalin: Laughter of the Audience in the Great Kremlin Palace in 1939', *Russian Review*, 68/1 (2009), 26–48

Skvortsov, N. G., V. D. Vinogradov, and N. A. Golovin, *Rosiiskaia sotsiologiia: istoriia i sovremennye problemy* (St. Petersburg: Izd. S. Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2007)

Slezkine, Yuri, and Galya Diment, 'Introduction', in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, ed. by Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 1–14

Smith, Hedrick, *The Russians* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976)

Solnick, Steven L., *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)

Stites, Richard, ed., *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia* (Bloomington, IN; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995)

Stronski, Paul, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2010)

Suny, R. G., 'On Ideology, Subjectivity, and Modernity: Disparate Thoughts about Doing Soviet History' *Russian History/Histoire russe* 35/1-2 (2008), 253-255

Suslov, Ilia, 'Censoring the Journalist', in *The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR*, ed. by Marianna T. Childin and Max Friedberg (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 145–54

Tabatchnikova, Svetlana, *Le cercle de méthodologie de Moscou: 1954-1959: Une pensée, une pratique* (Paris: EHESS, 2007)

Taubman, William, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbot Gleason, eds., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000)

Thom, Françoise, *Newspeak: The Language of Soviet Communism*, Trans. Ken Connelly (London; Lexington: The Claridge Press, 1989)

Tolz, Vera, ''Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 87–105

Tomov, Kirill, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Tracey, Michael, *The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Troianovskii, Vitalii, ed., *Kinematograf ottepeli. Kniga vtoraia* (Moscow: Materik, 2002)

——, 'Novye liudi shestidesiatykh godov', in *Kinematograf ottepeli. Kniga vtoraia*, ed. by Vitalii Troianovskii (Moscow: Materik, 2002), pp. 6–60

Tsipursky, Gleb, 'Having Fun in the Thaw: Youth Initiative Clubs in the Post-Stalin Years', *Carl Beck Papers*, 2201 (2012)

Tuchman, Gaye, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978)

Vail', Petr, and Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka. 2-e izd.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998)

Varga-Harris, Christine, 'Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era', *Journal of Social History* 41/3 (2008), 561-589

Volkovskii, N. L., *Otechestvennaia zhurnalistika, 1950-2000. Uchebnoe posobie. Chast' 1* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2006)

Walker, Barbara, 'Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West: Attitudes Toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s', *Kritika* 9/4 (2008), 905-927.

Weinberg, Elizabeth A., *The Development of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974)

——, *Sociology and the Soviet Union and Beyond: Social Enquiry and Social Change* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

Weiner, Douglas R., *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachëv* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999)

Weiner, Amir, 'Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution: The Life Cycle of the Soviet Revolution, 1945–1968', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 86/2 (2008), 208–31

——, 'Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises', in *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents*, ed. by A. R.

Johnson and R. E. Parta (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2010), pp. 299–317

Wilensky, Harold L., 'The Professionalization of Everyone?', *American Sociological Review*, 70/2 (1964), 137–58

Wolfe, Thomas C., *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Soviet Person after Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005)

Wood, Elizabeth A., *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005)

Yekelchik, Serhy, 'The Civic Duty to Hate: Stalinist Citizenship as Political Practice and Civic Emotion (Kiev, 1943-53)', 7/3 (2006), 529–66

Yurchak, Aleksei, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006)

Zaslavsky, Victor, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity, and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994 [1982])

Zassoursky, Ivan, *Media and Power in Post-Soviet Russia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004)

Zhao, Yuezhi, 'Understanding China's Media System in a World Historical Context', in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, ed. by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 143–73

Zhuk, Sergei, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2010)

Zubok, Vladimir, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009)

UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Atkinson, Lucy, 'The Public Sphere in Print: Do Letters to the Editor Serve as a Forum for Rational-Critical Debate'. Unpublished Conference Paper, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington DC, 2007

Clibbon, Jennifer, 'The Soviet Press and Grass-Roots Organization: The *Rabkor* Movement, NEP to the First Five Year Plan'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1993

Coe, Stephen, 'Peasants, the State and the Languages of NEP: The Rural Correspondents Movement in the Soviet Union, 1924-28'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1993

Evans, Christine, 'From Truth to Time: A History of Soviet Television, 1957-1982'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2010

Field, Deborah A., 'Communist Morality and Meanings of Private Life in Post-Stalinist Russia, 1953-1964'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996

Gilburd, Eleonory, 'To See Paris and Die: Western Culture in the Soviet Union, 1950s and 1960s'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2010

Loewenstein, Karl, 'The Thaw: Writers and the Public Sphere in the Soviet Union, 1951-1957'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 1999

Mills, Rilla D., 'The Soviet Journalist: A Cultural Analysis'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1981

Pinsky, Anatoly, 'The Individual after Stalin: Fedor Abramov, Russian Intellectuals, and the Revitalization of Soviet Socialism, 1953-1962'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2011

Prokhorov, Alexander, 'Inherited Discourse: Stalinist Tropes in Thaw Culture' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2002

Prokhorova, Elena, 'Fragmented Mythologies: Soviet TV Mini-Series of the 1970s'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2003

Rogers, Rosemarie S., 'The Soviet Audience: How it Uses the Mass Media'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, MIT, 1967

Roth-Ey, Kristin, 'Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2003

Roudakova, Natalia, *From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of their Public After Socialism*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 2007

——, *Bringing Culture Back Into the State: A Post-structural Look at the Soviet Press.* Unpublished m/s, 2009

Trofimov, Leonid T., 'The Soviet Media at the Onset of the Cold War, 1945-50'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2004

Tromley, Benjamin K., 'Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2007

Tsipursky, Gleb, 'Pleasure, Power, and the Pursuit of Communism: Soviet Youth and State-Sponsored Popular Culture During the Early Cold War, 1945-1968'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011

Varga-Harris, Christine, 'Constructing the Soviet Hearth: Home, Citizenship and Socialism in Russia, 1956-1964'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois, 2005

Volkova, Tat'iana A., 'A.I. Adzhubei -- Redaktor i publitsist'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, MGU, 2010

Wessell, Nils H., 'The Credibility, Impact and Effectiveness of the Soviet General Press: An Analysis of Soviet Research on the Soviet Non-Specialized Newspaper'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1972

Willimott, Andy, 'Socialism in One Apartment: Activist Communes, Ideology, and Praxis in the Early Soviet State, 1917-1934'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, UEA, 2012